## 5. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

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5. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Element of the Contra Costa County General Plan is to establish transportation goals and policies, and to establish specific implementation measures to assure that the transportation system of the County will have adequate capacity to serve planned growth in Contra Costa County through the year 2020. The intention of this Element is to provide a plan and implementing measures for an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that will safely and efficiently meet the transportation needs of all economic and social segments of the County and provide for the transport of goods and services throughout Contra Costa County.

The transportation system outlined in this Element recognizes on the one hand the limited availability of transportation funding and, on the other hand, the growing need for improved accessibility to the activities important to our quality of life. As a result, the Element emphasizes the efficient use of the existing transportation system and cost effective enhancements to this system to accommodate planned growth consistent with the Land Use Element. The County will continue to seek revenue from a variety of sources for needed transportation improvements and to work toward the establishment of new and creative funding mechanisms (i.e., private/public and regional partnerships) consistent with the goals and policies of the Growth Management Element and Measure C - 1988. The County will also seek improved land use patterns in Contra Costa that reduce the need to travel long distances to meet our daily needs.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Transportation and Circulation Element is prepared pursuant to Section 65302(b) of the California Government Code. This Element has been a mandatory component of local General Plans since 1955. The Transportation and Circulation Element is required to address the location and extent of existing and planned transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities. It is further required to be consistent with the other elements of the General Plan, accommodating future travel demand and contributing to, rather than inhibiting, the attainment of desired land use patterns in the Land Use Element.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

Section 65300.5 of the California Government Code requires that the various elements of a General Plan comprise an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency. The law emphasizes that the Transportation and Circulation Element be coordinated with the Land Use Element. The transportation plan, policies, and implementing measures established by this Element comply with the requirement by utilizing the same projections of future population and economic activity as does the Land Use Element, by using the same geographic distribution of future population and economic activity as expressed in the Land Use Element map, and by designing the transportation plans and policies to contribute to the achievement of the planned land-use pattern.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

The Roadway and Transit Network Plans shown in this element have been constrained to reflect limited financial resources. Consistency with the Land Use Element is maintained through the interplay of these elements with the Growth Management Element. The Transportation and Circulation Element funding programs for capital projects are correlated with the programs contemplated in the Growth Management Element. The Transportation and Circulation Element incorporates the implementation of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s (CCTA), Expenditure Plan passed by the voters in November 1988. This Element also assumes availability of the revenue generated by Regional Measure 1, the Propositions 108, 111 and 116 approved by the voters in June 1990, the California Traffic Congestion Relief Act of 2000, and Proposition 42 approved by the voters in 2002. This element also assumes maintenance of the various fee programs on new development established by the County to construct the road facilities needed to serve that development. The Board of Supervisors designated the CCTA as the Congestion Management Agency for Contra Costa County. The County meets the congestion management planning requirements through the transportation planning process established by the CCTA.

A separate Scenic Routes Element was previously required as a mandatory General Plan component. However, state law now encourages the scenic routes' goals and policies be included within the Transportation and Circulation Element. Thus, this plan merges the scenic route discussion and policies into this Element. It should be noted that some transportation related issues are included in other elements of the Contra Costa County General Plan. Biking, Pedestrian, and Equestrian Trails Plans are included as part of the Recreation section of the Open Space Element. Policies that address the impacts of vehicle emissions on air quality are found in the Open Space/Conservation Element. The Noise Element also addresses transportation issues by identifying the noise impacts of traffic in the County, based upon the Roadway Network Plan and the traffic volumes that are forecasted on key roadways. The topic of oil and natural gas pipelines, often covered in Circulation Elements is discussed in the Safety Element.

5.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN DOCUMENTS

The goals, policies and implementation measures contained in this Element are intended to guide planning for public and private projects that are subject to either approval of the County planning agency, or to review by County staff, although they may be under the jurisdiction of other public agencies operating in the County. Such goals, policies and implementation measures are further intended to be in accordance with other elements of the General Plan, as well as with other planning documents, such as the Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

The Transportation and Circulation Element is largely consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s 2001 Update of the Bay Area Regional Transportation Plan. The East County Corridor and the I-680 busway through the State Route 24 interchange are not included in the Regional Transportation Plan.

5.4 ORGANIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

This Transportation and Circulation Element addresses roadways, transit, bikeways, and transportation demand management (TDM) programs, as well as air, rail, and water transportation facilities. The format of the Element is as follows:

1. An analysis of existing and future transportation needs.
2. The fundamental concept that shapes this element.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

3. A presentation of goals, policies and implementation programs for each of the following topics:

- Roadways and transit
- Transportation System Management
- Pedestrian Facilities and Bikeways
- Scenic Routes
- Airports and Heliports
- Ports and Proprietary Wharves
- Railroads

Note that the required discussion of terminals is provided as part of the treatment of airports, heliports, ports, proprietary wharves, and railroads.

5.5 EXISTING AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Travel conditions in Contra Costa County are greatly influenced by its location on the eastern side of the San Francisco Bay metropolitan region (see Figure 5-1). Bridges, freeways, and trains link Contra Costa to every part of the Bay Area. Commute patterns are especially affected by the employment centers in San Francisco and Alameda County, and the residential areas of Solano County. It is estimated that 42 percent of work trips originating in Contra Costa are destined for another Bay Area county.

Such inter-county travel patterns require that the Transportation and Circulation Element recognize the impacts of development outside Contra Costa County in addition to projected development inside the County. The Element accomplishes this task by incorporating projections of future population and employment activity in the remaining eight Bay Area counties for the year 2020. These projections were prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments, and were combined with the Contra Costa data to estimate the influence of regional growth on the level and orientation of travel in the County. Estimates of inter-regional traffic, primarily from the Central Valley, were also included in the forecasts.

EXISTING NETWORK

The County's transportation system is comprised of a network of Federal, State and County roads, regional transit systems, bikeways, elderly and disabled transportation services (paratransit), as well as air, water and rail service, and pipelines. Pipelines are discussed in the Safety Element.

Roadways

The County's roadway network includes Interstates 80, 580, and 680, State Routes 4, 24, 123, and 242. In addition, numerous locally maintained arterials, streets and roads make up the remaining network. Of special importance are the four bridges and three tunnels that link Contra Costa with the Bay Area Region. These include the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (non-motorized access being planned), Carquinez Bridge (accessible by non-motorized modes), Benicia-Martinez Bridge (non-motorized mode access open approximately 2009, Antioch Bridge (accessible by non-motorized modes), and the Caldecott Tunnel (indirect access, see “BART”).
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

BART

Train service operated by the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District is the major form of public mass transit in Contra Costa County. BART is a regional transit operator with two train lines and ten stations serving the County and providing connections to Alameda, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. The Richmond line has three Contra Costa stations that serve an average 17,000 trips each weekday. The Pittsburg line has seven Contra Costa stations that serve an average of 32,000 trips each weekday. There currently are plans to expand BART from the Pittsburg/Bay Point station to other points in East County, such as Antioch.

Bicycles are allowed on all BART trains except those trains in the highlighted (peak commute periods) area of BART schedules. Cyclists must park bicycles at the station rather than bring them on train car during these times.

Bus

Bus service makes up the balance of the County’s mass transit system. AC Transit serves portions of Western Contra Costa County with fixed bus service to Northern Alameda County and downtown San Francisco. The northwest portion of the County is served by the Western Contra Costa Transit Authority (WESTCAT), which operates both fixed-route and demand-response dial-a-ride buses. Central Contra Costa County is served by both fixed route and demand response buses operated by the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA), also called the County Connection. The eastern end of the County is provided both fixed route and demand-response bus service by the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (Tri-Delta).

All transit agencies serving Contra Costa County have the capacity to bicycles on or in their vehicles.

Park and Ride

Park and Ride facilities have been established throughout the County to encourage the use of transit and high occupancy vehicles. BART maintains twelve park and ride lots in Contra Costa providing over 18,000 parking spaces for BART patrons. Ten of these lots are at BART stations and others are in Antioch and Brentwood. Caltrans has established sixteen park and ride facilities in the County providing over 1,600 spaces, which are used primarily as staging areas for carpools and vanpools.

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities in the County encompass sidewalks along roadways, paths and walkways that are separated from vehicular traffic and short cut paths that provide residents with convenient access from neighborhoods to schools, local shopping, transit stations, and other destinations. Walking that is accessible to people of all income levels, a component of virtually every trip, and should be encouraged as a safe, healthy, convenient, inexpensive, and useful component of the transportation system.

Bikeways

County bikeways include both on-road and off-road facilities which are operated and maintained by the County, cities, the East Bay Regional Park District and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Bicycling is a popular form of recreation as well as a viable form of transportation for many residents in the County. It has been estimated that lower income residents of Contra Costa County are three times more likely to choose a bicycle to commute to work than the general population. Bicycling is a practical and healthy alternative to driving both as a primary local commute alternative for trips within a few miles and as a part of regional trips that utilize several modes of
transportation such as bicycling to and from transit stations. Improvements to the connectivity of the countywide bicycle network, streets, intersections, sidewalks and other facilities can improve access and safety for bicyclists, particularly for those users who are children and senior citizens.

Related discussion, goals, policies and implementation measures, regarding bikeways are included in the "Parks and Recreation" section of the Open Space Element.

**AMTRAK**

AMTRAK operates both long distance and intercity trains through Contra Costa County. Intercity service has been increasing; with eleven trains operate daily between Sacramento and Oakland thru Contra Costa. In addition, eight trains operate daily between Oakland and Bakersfield through Contra Costa County. There is also a plan for an intermodal station in Hercules, which would connect to the other stations in Contra Costa County.

Amtrak operates certain routes in Contra Costa County that have the capacity to carry bicycles.

**Air, Water and Railroads**

Several air, water, and railroad transportation systems and facilities are located within the County. A description and policies regarding Buchanan Field and the East County airports is found in the "Airports and Heliports" section. A similar description and relevant policies for water transportation facilities are included in the section "Ports and Proprietary Wharves", and rail-related facilities and policies are described in the "Railroads" section.

**EXISTING TRAVEL DEMAND**

The most comprehensive and recent data on local travel was collected from two sources, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) 2001 Regional Transportation Plan and the 2000 Census Journey to Work data. The Regional Transportation Plan released by MTC in 2001 gives a general overview of regional and local travel patterns within Contra Costa and the Bay Area. In addition the plan forecasts future travel demand, which is discussed in greater detail in following section. The 2000 Census data documents the travel data of 3,416,710 Bay Area commuters and provides the most succinct overview of where Contra Costa and Bay Area Residents live and work. It should be noted that at the time of this revision staff from MTC are evaluating how the 2000 Journey to Work Census Data, released in March of 2003 affects the data presented in the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan as this plan was prepared prior to the data released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission estimated that Contra Costa County residents made an average of 2 million vehicle trips in 2000, per day. This averages to .35 daily trips for each Contra Costa resident. Compared with other residents in the surrounding Bay Area Counties, Contra Costa residents generate fewer vehicle trips than Solano County residents (.39 trips/day) and Alameda County Residents (.36 trips/day).

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Contra Costa residents utilized a variety of means of transportation when making these daily trips, work trips generating a majority of these daily trips. In 2000 Contra Costa residents drove alone to work 70 percent of the time, carpooled an average of 14 percent and took transit 9 percent of the time. The average amount of time it took Contra Costa residents to commute to work was approximately 34 minutes, which is a 17 percent increase from 1990. Contra Costa County imported about 84,000 workers from outside the County in 2000 to fill jobs in the County while exporting about 187,000 employed residents to fill jobs outside the County. An estimated 339,000 work trips were destined for work sites in Contra Costa each weekday in 2000. Approximately 75 percent of the work trips destined for work sites in Contra Costa County were made by County residents. The remaining 25 percent were made by residents living in Alameda County (10%), Solano County (7%) and
other counties in Northern California (8%). A considerable amount of the traffic that entered Contra Costa County during peak hours in 2000 is thought to be through traffic going to jobs in other counties. For example, the 2000 Census identified 58,000 commuters from Solano and Napa County who go to jobs in Alameda, San Francisco and other counties further south. It is assumed that a large portion of these commuters travel through Contra Costa County.

The result of these travel patterns is that considerable congestion occurs on the County’s regional roadway system, as well as on many arterial streets in specific communities. Locations that act as bottlenecks on a regular basis include:

- The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, the Carquinez Bridge, the Benicia Bridge and the Caldecott Tunnel.
- Westbound I-80 through Richmond in the AM peak and eastbound I-80 at Hercules in the PM peak period.
- I-680 at the junction of State Route 4 and at Livorna Road for southbound travelers.
- State Route 4 at Railroad Avenue.
- Ygnacio Valley Road, through Walnut Creek and Concord.
- Camino Pablo at Bear Creek Road.

**FUTURE TRAVEL DEMAND**

A discussion of the 2020 estimates of travel behavior in Contra Costa County based on this travel forecast information is provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

Travel demand is primarily a function of the projected land-use in Contra Costa and neighboring counties. The General Plan is the basis for projected land use in Contra Costa. ABAG’s projections for the year 2020 are provided at the 2000 Census Tract level. These tract-level forecasts were released as part of ABAG’s 2002 Projections that report and provide forecasting data for the years 2000 through 2025. ABAG’s projections are then aggregated and split into a regional travel analysis zone systems (consisting of 1,454 zones in the Bay Area) by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission then summarizes this data through its database and travel demand forecast models. The data is then presented on a regional level as shown within 34 Super districts covering the nine Bay Area Counties based on the 2000 Census Tracts.

It is estimated that by the year 2020 Contra Costa residents will generate approximately 2.8 million trips. Automobiles are currently estimated to account for almost 70 percent of drive-alone work trips, and the remaining thirty percent utilizing carpools and transit, including 4 percent that commute via walking and bicycling.

The number of trips made by Contra Costa residents is projected to increase by 35 percent from the year 2000. The Regional Transportation Plan predicts that the majority of people’s trips will begin and end in the County where they reside. Currently trips within the County, referred to as intra-county trips, now make up 84 percent of all trips and 70 percent of work trips. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission estimates that this percentage will remain stable through 2020. Work trips will continue to be the primary factor in peak hour congestion.

**FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS THAT SHAPE THIS ELEMENT**

The projected increase in travel demand points to the need for expanded transportation facilities and services, given that existing facilities are strained to near capacity in one or both directions during rush hours. Providing expanded facilities poses both environmental and financial problems.

The Transportation and Circulation Element is a part of how the county can guide and shape growth. However, it is only one component of a General Plan which acts as a development,
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

conservation and economic blueprint for the County. The Land Use Element and Growth Management Element specifically address the timing, densities, and patterns of future growth.

A well-planned and integrated multi-modal transportation network provides for and accommodates anticipated employment and residential growth and safely and efficiently meets the transportation needs of all economic and social segments. A well-defined transportation network also gives public and private interests a vision of needed improvements and an opportunity to assess costs and develop funding programs well in advance of actual growth.

The following fundamental concepts have been recognized in developing this Transportation and Circulation Element:

- Automotive congestion is a result of the demand for mobility, specifically automobility, and represents an equilibrium between supply and demand, usually during peak travel periods.
- Congestion results in loss of time and productivity, accidents, personal frustration, increase in pollution, adverse community reaction, and use of residential streets for commuting purposes (which can have additional adverse safety impacts).
- Congestion also causes people to defer trips that are not urgent, choose alternative destinations and modes where viable options exist, and forego avoidable trips.
- In some cases, increasing road capacity can increase peak period mobility by reducing travel times in the short term, but within 5-10 years over half the new capacity added in typical urban areas to alleviate congestion is filled with new traffic, a significant portion of it induced by the capacity increase itself.
- There are formidable physical, legal, and financial limits to expansion and/or improvements to the road system in the county, especially on segments that are already congested.
- Contra Costa County, the Bay Area and California will continue to experience population growth over the next 20 years and transportation systems will continue to be strained.
- A desirable living environment and a prosperous business environment cannot be maintained if vehicular congestion levels continue to increase. Various methods must be used to reduce the impact of automobiles in Contra Costa County and to provide viable alternatives to commuting alone by car. This must be done to reduce congestion levels and to make the county a place where commuters aren’t forced to use a freeway for local or regional travel.
- Near-term solutions to conflicts between vehicular traffic demands and system capacity limits require utilizing existing roadways to the effective limits of their design capacity in order to manage congestion.
- Longer-term solutions require significant enhancement to both the transportation system and the location and character of development, in addition to encouraging changes in travel behavior patterns, especially with regard to intra-county travel.
- Improving the quality, safety, and reliability of transit, walking, and bicycling facilities in the county will both allow and encourage greater use of these alternatives. Greater use of these alternatives will help relieve congestion for those who still wish to drive, reduce public health problems stemming from air quality problems and physical inactivity, reduce regional contributions to climate change, reduce regional oil dependence, and increase the viability of these options for those who cannot drive whether from income, age, or ability.
- Even with the investment of $8.6 billion in State and Federal revenue to add to local funds for transportation improvements over the life of this plan, the amount of growth in the region and current trends in automobile use will make desired level of service standards (LOS) unattainable along many portions of County roadways.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

- Streets should be designed, maintained according to the “Complete Streets” philosophy, which accomplishes the following:
  - Specifies that ‘all users’ includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists, of all ages and abilities.
  - Aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network.
  - Recognizes the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced.
  - Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads.
  - Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
  - Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
  - Directs the use of the latest and best design standards.
  - Directs that complete streets solutions fit in with context of the community.
  - Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.

- Some of the specific approaches proposed in this Element for both near-term and longer-term solutions include the following:
  - Place limits on the capacity of streets and highways which enter the County (near-term).
  - Improve the reliability and convenience of inter and intra-County transit service (longer-term).
  - Close gaps in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks. Work towards a continuous, safe, and reliable network of alternatives to automobiles that covers local and regional attractions (long term).
  - Expand roadways and plan for new roadways where feasible and appropriate (longer-term).
  - Accept congestion as an inevitable traffic condition for single occupancy automobiles during rush hours (near-term).
  - Improve the design of new development to provide alternative routes for circulation on the roadway system (near- and longer-term).
  - Improve the design of new development to provide convenient use of alternative forms of transportation (near- and longer-term).
  - Encourage ride sharing and staggered work hour programs (near-term).
  - Construct HOV lanes and on-ramp metering lights along commute corridors (near-term).
  - Support new development that provides for a mix of land uses which complement each other, encourage shared parking, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (near- and longer-term).
  - Establish Pedestrian Districts in selected locations using the MTC Pedestrian District Study as a guideline (longer-term).

5.6 ROADWAYS AND TRANSIT INTRODUCTION

The need for roadway and transit facilities is most directly tied to the land use patterns set forth in the Land Use Element. As described above, buildout of the land use plan through the year 2020, together with anticipated growth outside of the County, would place excessive demands on the existing circulation infrastructure in the County. The goals, policies and implementation measures set forth in this section, together with those in the Growth Management Element, are intended to address the future circulation needs of Contra Costa County.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

ROADWAY AND TRANSIT NETWORK PLANS

The Roadway and Transit Network Plans are the result of a coordinated planning process that incorporates the goals, policies and implementation measures of this Transportation and Circulation Element, in addition to the Land Use Element and Growth Management Element. As such, these network plans are a compromise between the ultimate transportation needs of the County, fiscal reality, and the potential development constraints imposed by the Growth Management Element.

The premise of the Roadway and Transit Network Plans is therefore best summarized as follows:

- A roadway and transit network plan to accommodate travel demand that would result from assumed year 2020 buildout of the land use plan was developed. There is a shortfall in funding to implement this plan.
- The combination of the Land Use plan with a financially constrained transportation network, and the provision of the Growth Management Element, will have the effect of slowing growth in the County until additional transportation revenues are secured and/or more efficient commuting habits are adopted.

The Roadway Network Plan is shown in Figure 5-2. The Transit Network Plan is shown in Figure 5-3. While monies are available to complete numerous transportation improvements through the year 2020, roadway projects anticipated by the roadway network plan for which sources of revenue haven’t been identified yet include HOV lanes on I-80 between State Route 4 and the Carquinez Bridge and the State Route 4 Bypass upgrade to a freeway configuration. Similarly, on transit projects the BART Hilltop Mall Extension and the busway project through the 680/24 interchanges do not have funding identified to be completed by 2020.

ROADWAY DESIGNATIONS AND DESIGN CRITERIA

This section describes the classifications of roadways shown in the accompanying Roadway Network Plan. The purpose of the classifications is to define the Circulation Element’s intent for the function and design of roadways specified in the Roadway Network Plan.

Freeways

Freeways are defined as controlled-access, high speed roadways designed to carry high volumes of intercity, intercounty, and interstate traffic, although they may carry considerable local traffic in urban areas. This class of facilities is devoted entirely to the task of traffic movement, and performs no direct land service function. The following design standards shall apply to freeways:

1. Opposing travel lanes shall be separated by a median.
2. Access shall not be permitted from abutting parcels.
3. The design of crossings should be based on best practices and consider the safety and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities.

Auxiliary lanes may be provided from one interchange to another in densely developed urban areas which have closely spaced interchanges or where substantial travel demand exits between two consecutive interchanges.
NOTE:

Additional Detail for Collector roadways and lane requirements on the enlarged Roadway Network Plan is found at the end of the General Plan.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

Expressways
Expressways are defined as controlled-access, moderate speed roadways serving intercity or intercounty trips. This class of facilities is devoted entirely to the task of traffic movement, and performs limited land service function. Intersections may be at grade. The following design standards shall apply to expressways:

1. Opposing travel lanes shall be separated by a median if there are two or more travel lanes in each direction.
2. Access shall not be permitted from abutting parcels; however, access may be allowed prior to improvement of roadway segments to expressways standards if there is no alternative access route to a parcel.
3. Intersections with median breaks shall occur only at arterials or other expressways.
4. Acceleration and deceleration lanes may be provided at intersections.

Arterials
Arterials move traffic to and from freeways, expressways or collectors and are part of an integrated system of major through roadways. Their traffic function is of countywide or intercity importance for motorists and bicyclists alike, rather than serving primarily local area traffic. Arterials mainly serve to move traffic, but they normally also perform a secondary land service function.

1. Access from abutting parcels may be allowed but shall be secondary to protection of the traffic serving function of the roadway. Driveways shall be restricted or may be prohibited altogether to improve capacity and safety.
2. Opposing travel lanes should generally be separated by a median if there are two or more travel lanes in each direction.
3. Turning lanes and deceleration/acceleration lanes should be considered at intersections with roadways designated as arterials or collectors, and may be desirable at other intersections.
4. Rights-of-way at approaches to intersections with other arterials should be sufficient to accommodate dual left-turn lanes.
5. Signalization shall generally give priority to through traffic or transit vehicles on the arterial.

Collectors
Collectors are for internal traffic movement within a community, carrying both automobile and non-motorized traffic to arterials and between neighborhoods. They are low speed roadways that do not ordinarily carry a high proportion of through trips and are not, of necessity, continuous for great lengths. Collectors are often important segments of regional bicycle networks and also provide local networks for Low Speed Vehicles (LSVs) as defined in the California Vehicle Code, Section 385.5. LSV connectivity between neighborhoods and transit centers and other local attractors can only be provided by collectors and local roads because LSVs can only travel on roadways with speed limits of 35 mph or less. Collectors may also serve to provide access to property, especially in rural areas. Access from abutting parcels in residential areas shall be discouraged. Driveways and parking may be restricted. These facilities are also often-used by pedestrians and should be engineered for pedestrian safety.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

**Local Roads**

Local Roads are low speed, low capacity roadways that provide automotive and non-motorized circulation within neighborhoods and access to adjacent land. Street design standards and layouts are used to discourage through traffic movements except for non-motorized through traffic, to avoid high travel speeds and volumes of automobiles, and minimize neighborhood noise and safety impacts. Curbside parking is usually allowable. The design should also strongly encourage pedestrian and bicycle movements.

**TRANSIT NETWORK CONCEPTS**

The Transit Network Plan contemplates two different roles for public transportation: 1) provision of basic mobility for those individuals without access to automobiles or who are otherwise transit dependent; and 2) provision of a viable alternative means of travel to automobiles for all travelers, especially peak-period commuters. The Transit Network Plan establishes local transit service areas; areas where development densities will warrant the provision of fixed-route transit service by 2020. Fixed-route transit operations are the primary means of serving the basic mobility needs for transit dependent individuals in urban areas of the County. The Plan assumes additional local bus service to BART stations, as well as the implementation of the e-BART concept from the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station to Antioch.

The Transit Network Plan establishes transit corridors along the county’s freeways in order to provide convenient and reliable alternatives to driving alone on congested freeways. Within these corridors, the County will pursue the construction of rail transit service and high occupancy vehicle facilities, the establishment of express bus service, the integration of rail transit and bus service, and the promotion of carpools and vanpools. Existing and proposed studies will identify the feasibility of improving specific transit operations in the Transit Corridors. State law authorizes funding for a feasibility analysis of implementing urban and commuter transit service within the Transit Corridors. The I-80 and State Route 4 Transit Corridors are included in implementation plans under development by CCTA, BART and MTC. BART and CCTA have initiated environmental and design studies to extend BART service from the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station to Antioch, using diesel-powered rail cars. This type of BART service has been referred to as e-BART. The Water Transit Authority has recently completed a proposal to expand ferry operations between the East Bay and San Francisco which will be funded with the recent increase in tolls for state-owned bridges to $4.

**ROADWAY AND TRANSIT GOALS**

The following goals relate to the roadway and transit plan for Contra Costa County:

5-A. To provide a safe, efficient and integrated multimodal transportation system.

5-B. To coordinate the provision of streets, roads, transit and trails with other jurisdictions.

5-C. To balance transportation and circulation needs with the desired character of the community.

5-D. To maintain and improve air quality above air quality standards.

5-E. To permit development only in locations of the County where appropriate traffic level of service standards are ensured.

5-F. To reduce cumulative regional traffic impacts of development through participation in cooperative, multi-jurisdictional planning processes and forums.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-G. To provide access to new development while minimizing conflict between circulation facilities and land uses.

5-H. To ensure the mutual compatibility of major transportation facilities with adjacent land uses.

5-I. To encourage use of transit.

5-J. To reduce single-occupant auto commuting and encourage walking and bicycling.

5-K. To provide basic accessibility to all residents, which includes access to emergency services, public services and utilities, health care, food and clothing, education and employment, mail and package distribution, freight delivery, and a certain amount of social and recreational activities.

5-L. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources through provision of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

ROADWAY AND TRANSIT POLICIES

The following policies relate to the roads and transit system of Contra Costa County.

Circulation Phasing and Coordination

5-1. Cooperation between the cities and the County shall be strongly encouraged when defining level of service standards.

5-2. Appropriately planned circulation system components shall be provided to accommodate development compatible with policies identified in the Land Use Element.

5-3. Transportation facilities serving new urban development shall be linked to and compatible with existing and planned roads, bicycle facilities, pedestrian facilities and pathways of adjoining areas, and such facilities shall use presently available public and semi-public rights of way where feasible.

5-4. Development shall be allowed only when transportation performance criteria are met and necessary facilities and/or programs are in place or committed to be developed within a specified period of time.

5-5. Right of way shall be preserved to meet requirements of the Circulation Element and to serve future urban areas indicated in the Land Use Element.

5-6. Encroachment of unsuitable land uses adjacent to abandoned railroad right-of-way shall be prevented where such uses conflict with future uses of the right-of-way identified in the Land Use and Transportation/Circulation Elements.

Circulation Safety, Convenience and Efficiency

5-7. Through-traffic along arterials shall be improved by minimizing the number of new intersecting streets and driveways; and, when feasible, by consolidating existing street and driveway intersections.

5-8. Access points on arterials and collectors shall be minimized.

5-9. Existing circulation facilities shall be improved and maintained by eliminating structural and geometric design deficiencies.

5-10. Development of a secondary road system of expressways shall be considered as part of the solution to congested freeways.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-11. The use of freeways for community circulation shall be minimized by prioritizing transit circulation, safe, direct non-motorized routes, and secondarily by additional arterials and expressways.

5-12. The use of local and collector roadways for neighborhood circulation shall be encouraged.

5-13. The use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities shall be encouraged. Proper facilities shall be designed to accommodate bikes, pedestrians, and transit.

5-14. Physical conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicular traffic, bicyclists, and pedestrians shall be minimized.

5-15. Adequate lighting shall be provided for pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular, safety, consistent with neighborhood desires.

5-16. Curbs and sidewalks shall be provided in appropriate areas.

5-17. Emergency response vehicles shall be accommodated in development project design.

5-18. The design and the scheduling of improvements to arterials and collectors shall give priority to intermodal safety over other factors including capacity.

5-19. Efforts shall be made to increase short-term parking for retail uses in areas where it is currently inadequate.

5-20. New development (including redevelopment and rehabilitation projects) shall contribute funds and/or institute programs to reduce parking demand and/or provide adequate parking.

5-21. New development shall contribute funds and/or institute programs to provide adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities where feasible.

5-22. New subdivisions should be designed to permit convenient pedestrian access to bus transit and efficient bus circulation patterns.

Alternative Transportation/Circulation Systems

5-23. All efforts to develop alternative transportation systems to reduce peak period traffic congestion shall be encouraged.

5-24. Use of alternative forms of transportation, such as transit, bike and pedestrian modes, shall be encouraged in order to provide basic accessibility to those without access to a personal automobile and to help minimize automobile congestion and air pollution.

5-25. Improvement of public transit shall be encouraged to provide for increased use of local, commuter and intercity public transportation.

5-26. Rail transit extensions including protection and acquisition of necessary right-of-way, station areas, and potential non-motorized station access routes shall be encouraged along all freeway corridors.

5-27. Rail transit facilities or additional high occupancy vehicle lanes proposed within a designated transit corridor shall be considered consistent with this General Plan.

5. Transportation and Circulation Element

Environmental Considerations

5-29. New arterial roadways shall be routed around, rather than through neighborhoods, to minimize traffic impacts on residential areas.

5-30. Street systems shall be designed and/or modified to discourage additional through traffic in existing residential areas, but not at the expense of efficient bus transit or bikeways.

5-31. Roads developed in hilly areas shall minimize disturbance of the slope and natural features of the land.

5-32. Local road dimensions shall complement the scale and appearance of adjoining properties.

5-33. Landscaping and maintenance of street medians and curb areas shall be provided where appropriate.

5-34. Appropriate buffers, such as soundwalls, bermed embankments, depressed alignments, and open space areas along major transportation facilities, shall be provided adjacent to noise sensitive land uses.

5-35. Consolidation of utility/drainage/transportation corridors shall be considered, where appropriate.

ROADWAY AND TRANSIT IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Circulation Phasing and Coordination

5-a. Promote uniform roadway and path cross-sections and traffic signalization standards between the County and the cities.

5-b. The County shall participate on committees with neighboring jurisdictions to monitor traffic congestion on regional corridors and to coordinate the planning, design, funding, and construction of transportation improvements serving unincorporated areas.

5-c. The County shall annually adopt a Five Year Capital Improvement Program to establish priorities for and schedule construction of transportation projects in unincorporated areas. The Capital Improvement and Preservation Program shall contain projects to maintain desired Level-of-Service standards and/or accommodate the use of alternative modes of travel in unincorporated areas in accordance with the Growth Management Element and to serve development that has been approved for construction.

5-d. The County shall establish and maintain an Area of Benefit program to collect fees on new development for roadway and related transportation improvements specified in the Circulation Element. Fees shall be based on the traffic generated by a use and the costs of transportation improvements necessary to maintain acceptable Levels of Service and/or accommodate the use of alternative modes of travel with the cumulative amount of development authorized by adopted plans.

5-e. Establishment of assessment districts shall be encouraged to supplement or replace fees on new development.

5-f. The County shall work with the cities to establish regional funding mechanisms to fund regional transportation improvements and to attract state and federal highway and transit revenues. Funding mechanisms may include sales taxes, gas taxes, or fees on new development.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-g. The County shall coordinate its transportation planning efforts with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

5-h. The County shall work with cities to develop Specific Plans for abandoned railroad right-of-ways that traverse unincorporated areas with a focus on alternative modes of travel.

5-i. Establish precise alignments plans for new or expanded arterials, expressways and freeways in order to reserve adequate rights-of-way for ultimate transportation system improvements indicated on the Roadway Network Plan (e.g. Delta Expressway, SR 4, etc).

Circulation Safety, Convenience, and Efficiency

5-j. Design local streets so that the widths and curvatures fit the needs of all users, the appropriate speed of travel, and the character of the surrounding site.

5-k. Design a system of local and collector streets within a development to connect pedestrians and bicyclists with transit stops, activity centers and adjacent neighborhoods.

5-l. Reserve rights-of-way to ensure compatibility with transit service in the design of developments on appropriate freeway, expressway, arterial and collector routes.

5-m. Adopt design standards and right-of-way standards with typical sections showing relationships of pavement, median, sidewalks, abutting frontages, lighting, and landscaping and the needs of persons with disabilities.

Alternative Transportation/Circulation Systems

5-n. Enforce County TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Ordinances consistent with State law, and encourage neighboring jurisdictions to adopt similar ordinances.

5-o. Develop and implement a comprehensive program of park-and-ride lots, in cooperation with the cities, transit agencies, and Caltrans, to serve the demand forecasted by this Plan. These lots should be accessible from local neighborhoods via Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) networks and should have preferential LSV parking.

5-p. Coordinate station area and near-station area enhancement efforts with BART including expansion of non-motorized access and secure parking (automobile, covered bicycle racks and on-demand lockers and, preferential LSV)

5-q. Encourage and coordinate efforts with BART to extend train service along State Route 4 to Brentwood and along I-80 to northwestern Contra Costa County.

5-r. In cooperation with interested local jurisdictions, regional agencies, and transit operators, conduct a study investigating the feasibility of implementing commuter rail, urban rail, and other regional transit services within the Transit Corridors identified in the Transit Network Plan.

5-s. Request MTC, in cooperation with affected local jurisdictions and transit operators, develop a comprehensive plan on the use of the three percent discretionary funds from Regional Measure 1, and include in the Plan a determination of the feasibility of additional ferry operations.

5-t. Coordinate efforts with BART, bus operators, and other jurisdictions to reserve rights-of-way, station sites, and other support facilities for rail extensions within the Transit Corridors identified in the Transit Network Plan.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-u. Coordinate efforts with all transit districts serving the county to provide for improved routing, bus frequencies, facilities, and improved design of land development plans.

5-v. Expand transit service areas to serve all urbanized portions of the El Sobrante Valley.

5-w. Develop a parking program to maximize traffic flow on new and existing arterials and collectors by reducing or eliminating on-street parking, by providing off-street parking or parking bays to accommodate on-street parking, or enhancing transit or ridesharing services.

5-x. Encourage Caltrans to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of ramp metering on freeways in the County, and if feasible and effective, support implementation.

5-y. Encourage Caltrans to expedite the incorporation of Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano County into the Bay Area Traffic Control System Program to improve the flow of traffic on the region's freeways.

5-z. Encourage Caltrans to construct a system of commuter lanes (high occupancy vehicle or HOV lanes) on new or expanded freeways within the Transit Corridors identified on the Transit Network Plan, and work with the cities and Caltrans in establishing additional commuter lanes on new or expanded expressways and regional arterials.

5-aa. Participate with the I-80 Reconstruction Advisory Committee to develop improvements to San Pablo Avenue as a reliever to I-80.

5-ab. Encourage Caltrans to construct the I-80 HOV facility for reversible operation, westbound for AM commute and eastbound for PM commute, and provide more opportunities for HOV access and egress along the facility.

5-ac. Support the establishment and operation of commuter transit services, serving the Transit Corridors identified on the Transit Network Plan, with emphasis on service to major employment centers and transit stations.

5-ad. Participate in studies and implementation efforts to improve intercity train service between Contra Costa County and other counties, especially in areas not served by BART.

5-ae. Develop a systematic program of interjurisdictional traffic operations improvements, such as signal coordination, low-cost geometric improvements, parking restrictions, etc.

5-af. Strongly encourage Caltrans to utilize private sector engineering services to expedite State highway projects.

5-ag. Design and allow for on-road bikeways on arterials and collectors as an alternative to car travel where this can be safely accommodated and off-street bikeways where on-road facilities cannot be safely accommodated or where a dedicated non-motorized facility is otherwise justified.

5-ah. Cooperate with MTC in its effort to increase tolls on regional bridges serving the County to help pay for alternative transportation service.

5.7 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is oriented towards encouraging efficient use of existing transportation facilities during peak periods of travel. TDM recognizes that large-scale investments in highway and transit facilities are frequently limited by the availability of financial resources and adverse community
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

reactions. TDM measures usually: 1) involve lower capital costs; 2) provide incentives designed to modify travel demand; 3) are implemented by local government or the private sector, and 4) give all travel modes equal consideration in providing access to development.

The County currently promotes TDM strategies in unincorporated areas through certain County ordinances. The County should continue to monitor the effectiveness of its zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure that new development provides multimodal access and does not solely rely on the automobile. To this end, if a new development has enough traffic generated to warrant a new transit stop (according to the appropriate transit jurisdiction), then such a development will extend the transit service area, which is shown in the County’s Transit Network Plan. Additional efforts to investigate in the future include: 1) establishment of maximum parking ratios and relaxing of minimum requirements; 2) shifting long-term parking in commercial areas to short-term use; 3) zoning regulations that encourage more pedestrian/transit friendly development.

5.8 PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AND BIKEWAYS

Pedestrian and bicycle transportation are a viable mode of commuter transportation in the urban areas on either side of the Berkeley Hills and throughout eastern Contra Costa County due to favorable topography and weather.

The County promotes the use of the Complete Streets philosophy to further advance the goals of this plan. Complete streets are streets safe for all users at all times throughout the County.

The County supports pedestrians and bicyclists by implementing the Routine Accommodation policy statement developed by the United States Department of Transportation, the California Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to ensure that the needs of walkers and bicyclists are integrated into Transportation Infrastructure. Considering, and making accommodation for bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety in the planning and designing of new or improved transportation facilities can benefit all modes of travel.

Pedestrian facilities are becoming increasingly important to address the various needs of County residents living in urban and rural settings as our community continues to develop and change. We are all pedestrians at one time, walking to the post office, using a wheelchair from a transit station to work, traveling from your car to a retail shopping center. Pedestrian facilities also encourage walking for better health. Additionally, lower income residents of Contra Costa County are over seven times more likely to walk as a primary commute mode than the general population. A well designed and well maintained system of pedestrian facilities provides safe, convenient and accessible access for residents.

Sidewalks shall be designed so they are wide enough to accommodate the potential pedestrian volume. Surfaces should be kept as level as possible. Intersections shall have well designed curb ramps on all corners and crosswalks, where provided, should be well marked and visible. Traffic signal phasing shall allow adequate time for pedestrians to cross as well as have accommodations for disabled users with impairments. Lighting shall be provided where needed for visibility and safety. The network of pedestrian facilities must provide convenient access to destinations that attract pedestrian travel, such as schools, parks, transit, neighborhood shopping, post offices and other public facilities.

Development of a comprehensive bikeway system will provide further incentive to commute by bike. The comprehensive bikeway system is the interconnected system of safe bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes that satisfy the travel needs of most
cyclists in the county. Many existing bikeways are of a recreational design which also serve as pedestrian trails and located off-street. These facilities should be supplemented by more off-street paths and more on-street commuter bikeways that provide direct access to commercial uses. A comprehensive bikeway system is depicted in a fold-out map in the back of the General Plan entitled "Bikeway Facilities Network".

"Bikeway" means all facilities that are provided primarily for bicycle travel. The following categories of bikeways are defined in the California Streets and Highway Code.

- **Class I Bikeway (Bike Path or Bike Trail):** Provides a completely separated right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with crossflows by motorists minimized.
- **Class II Bikeway (Bike Lane):** Provides a restricted right-of-way designated for the exclusive use or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through travel by motor vehicles or pedestrians prohibited, but with vehicle parking and crossflows by pedestrians and motorists permitted.
- **Class III Bikeway (Bike Route):** Provides a right-of-way designated by signs or permanent markings and shared with pedestrians or motorists.

In March of 2002 the Contra Costa Transportation Authority launched a comprehensive effort to work with local jurisdictions, agencies and special interest groups to produce the Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The outcome of this effort produced a comprehensive plan that was adopted by many City Councils and the Board of Supervisors. Relevant sections of the plan have been incorporated into this General Plan.

The following are the pedestrian facilities and bikeways goals, policies and implementation measures:

**5-L. Expand, improve and maintain facilities for walking and bicycling.**

5-36. Describe a system of bicycle facilities and key attractors of bicycle and pedestrian traffic so that all travelers, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

5-ai. Design a growing comprehensive and safe bicycle network using a mix of existing local roads, collectors and bikeways which prioritizes bicycle movement from residences to key attractors while minimizing automobile presence on the network. Coordinate with cities, transit agencies, community groups and public utilities.

5-aj. Where possible, roads selected for the comprehensive bikeway system should be 35 mph or less.

5-ak. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bike ways in the vicinity of schools and other public facilities and in commercial areas and provide convenient access to bus routes.

5-al. Ensure that pedestrian connectivity is preserved or enhanced in new developments by providing short, direct pedestrian connections between land uses and to building entrances.

5-am. Construct the bikeways shown in the Bikeway Network map and incorporate the needs of bicyclists in roadway construction and maintenance projects and normal safety and operational improvements.

5-an. Promote planning and coordination of pedestrian and bicycle facilities among cities, transit agencies and public utilities.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-ao. Provide secure bicycle parking facilities at appropriate locations, such as transit stations, as well as improved access to transit systems.

5-37. Identify gaps in the bicycle network and needed improvements to pedestrian districts and key activity centers and define priorities for eliminating these gaps and making needed improvements. Facilities shall be designed to the best currently available standards and guidelines.

5-ap. Pedestrian Districts should be created in areas of mixed or dense land use and intense or potentially intense pedestrian activity.

5-aq. Landscaping and trees should be used to enhance pedestrian facilities and should be selected to minimize future maintenance and safety issues.

5-ar. Streetscape improvements should be included in the design of high usage pedestrian facilities to encourage pedestrian activity. This would include improvements such as benches, public art, drinking fountains and pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures.

5-as. Provide sidewalks with a clear path wide enough to accommodate anticipated pedestrian use and wheelchairs, baby strollers or similar devices. This area clear zone must be free of street furniture, signposts, utility poles or any other obstruction.

5-at. Traffic calming measures should be designed so they improve pedestrian and bicycle movement in residential neighborhoods and commercial districts as well as strategic corridors between them that help form the comprehensive bicycle network.

5-38. Encourage adequate long term and routine maintenance of bikeway and walkway network facilities, including regular sweeping of bikeways and shared use pathways, utilizing private and/or local community resources when feasible.

5-au. Provide ways for the general public to report problems.

5-av. Include the cost of major maintenance needs of bicycle and pedestrian facilities when calculating the maintenance needs of streets and roadways.

5-M Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

5-39. Reduce conflicts among motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

5-aw. Use curb extensions and pedestrian islands and other strategies to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

5-ax. Use traffic control devices such as signs, signals or lights to warn motorists that pedestrians or bicyclists are in the roadway.

5-ay. Provide buffers between roads and sidewalks utilizing planter strips or buffer zones that provide streetscape improvements.

5-az. Provide buffers between train tracks and non-motorized facilities when necessary, utilizing distance, barriers, or grade separation.

5-ba. Ensure that users of non-motorized facilities are channeled to legal crossings of train tracks, which are use appropriate traffic control devices and are adequately inspected and maintained.

5-40. Provide information to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

5-bb. Support development of a countywide collision data analysis program that will generate collision rates useful for planning purposes.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-bc. Support the development and implementation of programs to educate drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians as to their rights and responsibilities,

5-N Encourage more people to walk and bicycle.

5-41. Work with local and regional agencies to develop useful and cost effective programs to encourage more people to walk and bicycle.

5-42. Support programs such as "safe routes to school maps and "bike trains" or "walking school buses" for elementary students that would encourage more students to walk or bicycle to school.

5-43. Encourage the use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities to promote healthy transportation choices.

5-44. Encourage the use of wayfinding and signage to help direct pedestrians and bicyclists to desirable destinations.

5-O Plan for the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.

5-45. Accommodate and encourage other agencies to accommodate the needs for mobility, accessibility and safety of bicyclists and pedestrians when planning, designing and developing transportation improvements.

5-bd. Review capital improvement projects to make sure that needs of non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclist and persons with disabilities) are considered in programming, planning, maintenance, construction operations and project development activities and products.

5-be. Incorporate sidewalks, bike paths, bike lanes, crosswalks, pedestrian cut-throughs, or other bicycle pedestrian improvements into new projects.

5-bf. Where economically feasible provide safe and convenient alternatives when bicycle or pedestrians facilities are removed.

5-bg. Accommodate cyclists and pedestrians during construction of transportation improvements and other development projects.

5-46. Support the incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into other capital improvements projects, where appropriate, to expand bicycle-pedestrian facilities, harmonize the needs of all travel modes, and achieve economies of scale.

5.9 SCENIC ROUTES

INTRODUCTION

This scenic routes plan is intended to add considerations of roadway road corridor appearances and aesthetics to the scope of the County General Plan. This plan has two basic purposes: it enables the County to request that the State designate state routes to the State highways program, while at the same time providing a local scenic route implementation program.

Such a plan provides recognition of the perception we have of our surroundings while traveling through the County. Presently Contra Costa County has numerous roadways that pass through areas affording pleasurable views. The number of such roadways where scenic quality exists will diminish, however, unless protected. Their character is changed through improvements to them or when land adjacent to them is developed.

This plan identifies a Countywide scenic route system and ensure that new projects approved along a scenic route are reviewed to maintain their scenic potential. Most scenic routes depend on natural landscape qualities for their aesthetics and many formally designated scenic routes
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

have been established in predominantly rural areas in the past, but neither natural beauty nor rural settings are necessary to the designation of scenic routes.

**DEFINITION AND MAPS OF SCENIC ROUTES**

For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions will apply; they should aid in understanding the relationship of the scenic roads to their environs.

A scenic route is a road, street, or freeway which traverses a scenic corridor of relatively high visual or cultural value. It consists of both the scenic corridor and the public right-of-way.

The public right-of-way includes the roadbed and adjacent lands in public control. It includes lands utilized for roadway protection, storm drainage, public utilities, pedestrian travel, and roadside plantings. Usually this land is owned in fee or dedicated to local jurisdictions or the State. It should also include cycling or hiking trails, roadside rests, or turnouts, etc. Public projects in the right-of-way should be designed and carried out recognizing the purpose of this plan.

Semi-public rights-of-way include railroads, canals, or power transmission lines.

A scenic corridor is usually much wider than the road right-of-way and extends to the contiguous areas beyond it. Width of scenic corridors will vary greatly depending upon the present degree of development, landforms, topography, and the nature of scenic quality. The scenic corridor consists of much of the adjacent area that can be seen from the road. It is within this area that development controls, dedication, and the purchase of easements or lands in fee simple will be required, and public projects will be reviewed for compliance with this plan. Controls should be applied to retain and enhance scenic qualities, restrict unsightly use of land, control height of structures, and provide site design and architectural guidance along the entire scenic corridor.

Route 24 from the Alameda County line to the Interstate 680 interchange, and Interstate 680 south of that interchange to the Alameda County line, are existing State designated scenic routes within the State Scenic Routes program. Route 4 from Hercules to the intersection with Railroad Avenue is proposed for State designation as is the proposed State Route 4 Bypass to the Delta.

While the State Scenic Routes plan forms the skeletal framework for the County Scenic Routes program, Figure 5-4 identifies the other roadways which form the Countywide scenic routes plan. Inclusion on this map provides direction to County staff to review projects in a fashion which is compatible with the scenic qualities of these roads. Scenic routes are shown for the unincorporated areas; routes with scenic potential or to connect scenic areas are shown as connecting routes.

**SCENIC ROUTES GOAL**

5-P. To identify, preserve and enhance scenic routes in the County.

**SCENIC ROUTES POLICIES**

5-47. Scenic corridors shall be maintained with the intent of protecting attractive natural qualities adjacent to various roads throughout the county.

5-48. The planning of scenic corridors shall be coordinated with and maximize access to public parks, recreation areas, bike trails, cultural attractions, and other related public developments.
5-49. Scenic views observable from scenic routes shall be conserved, enhanced, and protected to the extent possible.

5-50. The existing system of scenic routes shall be enhanced to increase the enjoyment and opportunities for scenic pleasure driving to major recreational and cultural centers throughout this and adjacent counties.

5-51. Multiple recreation use, including trails, observation points, and picnicking spots, where appropriate, shall be encouraged along scenic routes.

5-52. Continued efforts shall be made in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation to achieve State scenic route recognition for appropriate routes in the County.

5-53. Design flexibility shall be encouraged as one of the governing elements for aesthetic purposes in the construction of roads within the scenic corridor.

5-54. For lands designated for urban use along scenic routes, planned unit developments shall be encouraged in covenant with land development projects.

5-55. Provide special protection for natural topographic features, aesthetic views, vistas, hills and prominent ridgelines at "gateway" sections of scenic routes. Such "gateways" are located at unique transition points in topography or land use, and serve as entrances to regions of the County.

5-56. Aesthetic design flexibility of development projects within a scenic corridor shall be encouraged.

SCENIC ROUTES IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

5-bh. Develop and enforce guidelines for development along scenic routes to maintain the visual quality of those routes.

5-bi. Develop a corridor improvement program including an interagency joint action and ordinance development program, to protect and enhance scenic qualities.

5-bj. Consider the visual qualities and character of the corridor in reviewing plans for new roads, road improvements, or other public projects. This should include width, alignment, grade, slope and curvatures of traffic islands and side paths, drainage facilities, additional setbacks, and landscaping.

5-bk. Attain development project design flexibility within the scenic corridor through application of the Planned Unit Development District Zoning.

5.10 AIRPORTS AND HELIPORTS

INTRODUCTION

The County has one general aviation airport with a second one being funded for development. Additionally, there are several private airfields which operate in the county and requests for heliports have been received from time to time. This section adds policies to the County General Plan which guide the use of airports, private airfields and heliports.

The overall goals and policies for airport and heliport operations in the county are outlined in the next two sections. A more detailed description and policies for Buchanan Field and the Byron Airport are included in separate sections below. Finally, special policies required by the Airport Land Use Commission are included following the discussion of the two airports. The noise contours for these airports are included within the Noise Element of this Plan.
AIRPORTS AND HELIPORTS GOALS

5-Q. To encourage the development and operation of two general purpose public airports in the county.

5-R. To allow heliports, restricted to appropriate locations, which would add to the economic well-being and safety of the county.

AIRPORTS AND HELIPORTS POLICIES

Overall Policies

5-57. Regulate the location of private airfields and heliports to minimize their impacts on adjacent residents, sensitive receptors, and to ensure public safety.

5-58. Protect the Byron Airport environs from urban encroachment through a combination of land acquisition, easement acquisitions and land use regulations.

5-59. Work with adjacent cities to ensure that Buchanan Field Airport environs are developed and redeveloped in ways which protect the public safety and maintain the viability of the airport.

5-60. Work with the FAA and helicopter operators to minimize conflicts with residential areas and sensitive land uses, such as schools, hospitals, residences, and other sensitive noise receptors.

Policies Regarding Buchanan Field

Buchanan Field is located on a 495-acre site in the unincorporated area of Contra Costa County adjacent to the cities of Concord and Pleasant Hill; a very small portion of airport property is located within Concord. It is a general use airport and has provision for scheduled commuter airline service.

The land use plan designations for this airport are shown on the Land Use Element map. Land uses allowed on the airport property should enhance the airport function and be consistent with its goals and operational requirements. Most of the site is designated "Public/Semi-Public" to reflect the airport use.

Special policies of this plan that apply to Buchanan Field are as follows:

5-61. The Buchanan Field Golf Course exists on the southwest edge of the airport adjacent to the intersection of Concord Avenue and I-680. The Bicycle Facilities Network Plan Map and Bicycle Trails Map, which are incorporated into the Transportation/Circulation Element and Open Space Element, respectively, each identify a proposed Class I trail facility located approximately within the conceptual road alignment for the former Diamond Boulevard extension. Also, the conceptual road alignment for the Diamond Boulevard extension had reserved space for a future transitway (non-elevated). The subsequent development of the Class I trail and transitway within the alignment of the former Diamond Boulevard extension will depend on when future funding becomes available and it may require modification to the existing golf course. This plan encourages the maintenance of a small golf course or some other recreation facility in the location of the golf course.

5-62. Passive recreational uses are appropriate in the approach path of the airport and will constitute an environmental enhancement and balance to serve as amenities for the development at the airport. Some maintenance responsibilities for these recreational facilities may be required of the airport projects.
5-63. Trail connections surrounding the airport are required. A riding, hiking and bicycle trail is shown along the Walnut Creek Flood Control Channel. Hiking and bicycle trails are shown flanking the airport on its remaining perimeter. These trails will serve as an amenity to the new office facilities in the area, as well as providing a connection to a regional trail linkage along the Walnut Creek Channel.

**Byron Airport**

The County has developed a full-service general aviation airport adjacent to the Town of Byron. The project location is approximately three miles south of the town of Byron and 2½ miles north of the Alameda County line. The Byron Highway passes one mile to the northeast. Long-range plans call for construction of a runway capable of serving 250,000 operations annually, and construction of parking to accommodate 250 aircraft.

The airport acquisition and development was jointly funded by the County, the State and Federal Governments. The airport boundaries encompass 1307 acres of which only 493 acres will be available for airport and compatible purposes. In addition to the land to be acquired in fee, an additional 2,000 acres of conservation easements may be acquired to preclude additional residential development and to control noise, height of structures, etc. In addition, aviation easements within two miles of the airport will also be acquired, later if needed, to assist in controlling development.

The expressed intent of the County is to have a second airport free from urban encroachment, and to prevent the establishment of related commercial or industrial development around the planned airport. Water and sewer services will be limited to serve only the airport; utilities will not serve growth on the adjacent properties. It is also for this reason that extra rights-of-way beyond the airport development proper are being acquired. Additionally, no residential development or sensitive receptors, e.g. hospitals, schools, etc., should be allowed within the projected 60 CNEL noise contours for the new airport. (For information only, Measure C - 1990 provides that one of the enumerated bases for changing the Urban Limit Line, upon a 4/5 vote, substantial evidence and public hearing, would be the following finding: (f) an objective study has determined that a change to the Urban Limit Line is necessary or desirable to further the economic viability of the East Contra Costa County Airport, and either (i) mitigate adverse aviation related environmental or community impacts attributable to Buchanan Field, or (ii) further the County’s aviation related needs.)

**Special policies of this plan that apply to the East County Airport are as follows:**

5-64. The County shall acquire fee title and/or conservation (development rights) easements to an appropriate amount of buffer land around the planned East County Airport.

5-65. The buffer land or conservation easements acquired around the airport shall ensure that incompatible uses will not be allowed to locate within the safety zone.

5-66. Establishment of commercial, industrial or residential development around the planned airport shall not be allowed.

5-67. Water and sewer services to the airport will be limited to serve only the airport properties; utilities will not serve growth on the adjacent properties.

5-68. No residential development or sensitive receptors, e.g. hospitals, schools, etc., shall be allowed within the projected 60 CNEL noise contours for the new airport.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

Special Policies Regarding the Airport Land Use Commission

The Public Utilities Code requires that the intent and purpose of adopted Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) plans and policies be incorporated into the County General Plan. The following policies apply to the two County airports:

5-69. Structural heights shall be designated by the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77 surfaces associated with the various runway designations shown on the latest Airport Layout Plan.

5-70. The Structural Height Limits defines maximum structural height. Height limits will be placed on new buildings, appurtenances to buildings, all other structures and landscaping in accordance with the Airport Layout Plan except in special instances when for reasons of safety the Commission may impose a more restrictive structural height.

An applicant for any structure within the Airport Land Use Commission Planning Area proposed to penetrate any height limit surface shall submit an aeronautical analysis which specifies the proposed project’s effect on airport instrument procedures for all runways, the effect on airport utility, and the effect on overall aviation safety. If, after reviewing the aeronautical study and other related information, it is determined that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on safety and airport utility then, the project may be approved for heights other than those indicated by the FAR, Part 77, Structural Height Limits.

5-71. All major land use actions within the Buchanan Field and Byron Airport Influence Areas as shown upon Figure 5-5 shall be referred to the Contra Costa County Airport Land Use Commission for comment. The definition of what constitutes a major land use action is found on pages 2-6 through 2-8 of the Contra Costa County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan adopted in December of 2000. If it is unclear whether or not an action falls within this listing, the County should err on the side of caution and refer the matter to the ALUC staff.

5-72. New construction or building exterior alterations located in areas of terrain penetration as defined by the ALUC Airspace Protection Surfaces will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to topography, flight patterns, existing vegetation and other factors which might affect airspace and safety. The County will rely on ALUC land use compatibility guidance and programs for considering airspace safety analysis issues and height limitations of structures.

5-73. Temporary structures, such as construction cranes or antennae, which would penetrate any adopted height limit surface, may be allowed after a case by case review, provided that obstruction lighting and marking is installed and a two week notice of temporary structure emplacement is provided by the proponent to the County Manager of Airports. Temporary structure emplacement shall be subject to reasonable time limit.

5-74. The County may require an exterior building materials reflectivity analysis upon review of the proposed types of building materials, building height, and building location and use on site. Such analyses should be required for development of any structures on or adjacent to public airports which would be over three stories in height and utilize reflective surfaces. Reflectivity studies shall address the potential for pilot and airport operation interference, proposed mitigation to any identified potential interference resulting from reflected sunlight, and any other subject areas related to reflectivity which the County may deem appropriate. The County may include some or all of the proposed mitigation in its project approval process.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-75. Within each safety zone designated by the ALUC, the following are incompatible uses (The ALUC Airport Influence Area Maps for Buchanan Field Byron Airports are shown on Figure 5-5.):

(1) Any light source which would direct a steady light or flashing light of red, white, green, or amber color associated with airport operations toward an aircraft engaged in an initial straight climb following takeoff or toward an aircraft engaged in a straight final approach toward a landing at an airport, other than an FAA approved facility.

(2) Any construction which would cause sunlight to be reflected toward an aircraft engaged in an initial straight climb following takeoff or toward an aircraft engaged in a straight final approach toward a landing at the airport.

(3) Any use which would generate smoke, attract large concentrations of birds, or may otherwise adversely affect safe air navigation within a safety zone.

(4) Any use which would generate electrical interference that would be detrimental to the operation of aircraft and/or aircraft instrumentation.

(5) Any use which would utilize or cause to be stored highly toxic, inflammable or otherwise hazardous materials which, in the event of an aircraft accident, could be released into the surrounding environment to threaten human life or property.

(6) Within the safety zone clear area, any use which involves the erection of a permanent above ground structure other than FAA approved facilities.

(7) Within the safety zones, excluding the clear areas, any use which on a regular basis would result in a density (excluding streets) in excess of 30 persons per acre or one person/500 square feet of gross building flood area, whichever is less.

(8) Any of the following uses: new single and multiple family residences, shopping centers, restaurants, schools, hospitals, arenas and other places of public assembly.

5-76. The following are suggested uses within the ALUC Compatibility Zones for Buchanan Field:

(1) agriculture;
(2) open space;
(3) warehousing;
(4) light industry;
(5) parking of automobiles; and
(6) low occupant density public uses, such as sewage treatment plants.

5-77. Within the ALUC Compatibility Zone B-1, no new lot splits shall be allowed and buildings on existing lots of record shall be located as far as practical from the extended runway centerline and shall be limited to two stories in height.

The following are suggested uses within the ALUC Compatibility Zones for the East Contra Costa Airport:

(1) agriculture;
(2) open space;
(3) low intensity park and recreation uses;
(4) low occupant density public uses; and
(5) parking of automobiles.
5-78. Airports and heliports may be allowed by issuance of a land use permit in zoning districts found by the Board of Supervisors to be suitable for such uses.

AIRPORTS AND HELIPORTS IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

5-bk. Create a new zoning district for County airports similar to the Planned Unit (P-1) District zone which provides for public review of on-site projects, and rezone both airports to that district.

5-bl. Review county ordinance code provisions and consider the suitability of each zoning district for the establishment of airports and heliports.

5-bm. Continue to regulate all heliports in the county by the land use permit process.

5-bn. Create a new zoning district to regulate private land use on the two public airports.

5-bo. Undertake hearing to rescind the "Airport Zoning Plan for Buchanan Field" adopted in 1955, and to approve preparation of an updated structural height limit plan.

5-bp. The subdivision ordinance should be amended to require the following actions prior to recording a final map for the ALUC Planning Area:

   1. Dedication of suitable aviation and noise easements for the area of the particular subdivision;

   2. Require the developer to record a covenant or provide other appropriate instruments to notify prospective buyers of lots that the property may be subject to frequent overflight and associated noise impacts.

5-bq. Any project in an area near the Buchanan Field airport with a designated noise level of 60 BA decibel CNEL or greater as shown on the Projected Noise Levels Map shall be required to attach a statement to any deed, lease, rental agreement, or Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions document pertaining to the use of the property. The statement shall indicate that the property is subject to aircraft overflight, and associated noise impacts.

5-br. An acoustical study shall be required for any discretionary residential project which the County will consider which is within the area designated on the Projected Noise Levels map to exceed 60 dBA level. The study should be submitted prior to accepting the application as complete and shall be by a certified noise acoustical firm.

5.11 PORTS AND PROPRIETARY WHARVES

INTRODUCTION

Contra Costa has historically been oriented to its waterfront, since the western end of the County is located on San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, and the northern shoreline fronts along the Carquinez Strait, Suisun Bay and the Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta. Industrial development in the county was concentrated along the shoreline, and this legacy remains today with port-oriented heavy industrial uses located in scattered locations from Richmond to Antioch. These industrial uses are important to the county economic base and the continued use of appropriate shoreline areas for heavy industries that rely on water traffic should be protected.

There is one major deep-water port in the county, the Port of Richmond, located in that city. In addition, there are several private ports or proprietary wharves, which serve large petroleum refineries and other industrial firms.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

PORTS AND PROPRIETARY WHARVES GOALS

5-S. To maintain the economic viability of the county's existing ports, wharves, and shipping lanes.

PORTS AND PROPRIETARY WHARVES POLICIES

5-79. The continued use of existing ports and proprietary wharves shall be recognized and encouraged.

5-80. Water-oriented industrial uses which require deep water access shall be encouraged along the shoreline, while other industrial uses which could be located on inland sites shall be discouraged.

5-81. New or replacement proprietary wharfs shall be allowed adjacent to industrial use areas, as long as environmental safeguards are followed and public access to the shoreline is provided.

5-82. The County shall advocate maintenance of deep-water channels at a depth that keeps ocean vessel use viable from San Francisco to the Army’s Military Traffic Management Command (former Concord Naval Weapons Station).

5-83. The Concord Naval Weapons Station deep-water port should be utilized for private port use if the property ever becomes excess government property.

PORTS AND PROPRIETARY WHARVES IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

5-bs. The County shall continue to work with the Bay Conservation Development Commission, the State Lands Commission, and other appropriate agencies to ensure adequate deep-water access is provided to industries along the county’s shoreline.

5-bt. The deep-water site at Selby should be reserved for a water-related industrial use.

5.12 RAILROADS

INTRODUCTION

There are four railroad lines which currently carry freight within Contra Costa County. The Southern Pacific railroad line, now owned by Union Pacific (UP), stretches 60 miles from Richmond to the Alameda County line near Clifton Court Forebay. The UP line is a high speed double track between Richmond and Martinez, and carries by far the most freight traffic of all the railroad corridors in the County. From Martinez, the UP track splits, with one track crossing the river to carry freight up the Sacramento Valley to the northwestern U.S., and one track (known as the “Mococo line”) continuing through Antioch, Oakley, Brentwood, Byron Tracy, and into the San Joaquin Valley and points south.

The 55-mile long Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad corridor roughly parallels the UP line between Richmond and Hercules, where it then turns inland through rural Franklin Canyon running south of Route 4 to the industrial areas east of Martinez. From there it again closely parallels the UP (and Sacramento Northern/Union Pacific) tracks as it passes through Pittsburg and Antioch, and then through Oakley and across the Delta to Stockton.

Two smaller freight lines also operate in the County. Union Pacific controls the subsidiary Sacramento Northern line from Clyde to Pittsburg, and the Bay Point and Clayton rail line serves the Army’s Military Traffic Management Command. The other major railroad corridor in the county, the SP tracks running north-south between Concord and through the San Ramon Valley to the Alameda County line, was
abandoned in the 1960s and has been largely acquired by the County with the assistance of state funds reserved for implementing mass transit systems. This abandoned SP San Ramon Valley Branch Line is now known as the Iron Horse Corridor. Currently it is used as a trail by pedestrians and bicyclists, and for pipelines and utilities operated by public and private entities. The County is developing a management program for the Iron Horse Corridor, starting with a Landscape Element that was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2000. The County’s management program reserves a portion of the Iron Horse Corridor for future use as a rail transportation line, per the requirements of the state grants that enabled the County to acquire the right-of-way. The portion of the Iron Horse Corridor that is used as a trail is maintained by the East Bay Regional Park District.

The same tracks used and owned by freight railroads also carry an increasing number of passenger trains. Thirty-two daily passenger trains (in June 2004) operate on the UP tracks between Richmond and Martinez, eight of these trains also operate on the UP tracks east of Martinez to Pittsburg and on the ATSF tracks between Pittsburg and the San Joaquin County line.

The daily passenger trains operating in the County include Capitol Corridor trains linking the Bay Area to Sacramento; the San Joaquins, linking the Bay Area to the Central Valley; the Zephyr, linking the Bay Area to Chicago; and the Coast Starlight, linking the Bay Area to points north and south along the Pacific Coast.

Rail lines are directly involved with the economic vitality of the County, since numerous industries depend on the rail movement of heavy goods such as oil and chemical products, coal, lumber, and automobiles, as well as containerized cargo. The importance of railroad lines is further increased by the growing ridership of intercity passenger trains serving the County, and future plans for urban, commuter, and intercity rail passenger service to provide alternatives to the region's freeway congestion. This plan still needs to consider alternative land uses for the corridors in the event of any abandonment of rail services or plans along these routes in the future.

RAILROADS GOALS

5-T. To protect the existing railroad rights-of-way in the county for continued or future railroad use, utility corridors, roads, transit facilities, trails and other public purposes.

RAILROADS POLICIES

5-84. Railroad rights-of-way shall generally be designated for Public/ Semi-Public uses to reflect their importance to the County's economy.

5-85. Encroachments into railroad rights-of-way by urban uses which would impact current rail operations or preclude future use of the corridors for trails or other public purposes shall be limited.

5-86. Trails shall be considered an appropriate interim use of an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

5-87. Encroachment of unsuitable land uses adjacent to abandoned railroad right-of-way shall be prevented where such uses would conflict with future uses of the right-of-way identified in the Land Use, and Transportation and Circulation Elements.
5. Transportation and Circulation Element

5-88. The Southern Pacific right of way (now known as the Iron Horse Corridor) south of Rudgear Road should be limited to utility and non-motorized transportation use only.

POLICIES ON INTERCITY RAIL SERVICES

5-89. Increase ridership by:

a. Increasing awareness of intercity service by increasing and improving marketing and promotional opportunities.

b. Increasing access (seamless transfer systems between passenger trains and other modes; additional train service; and planning for compact land uses around rail stations.

c. Increasing the level of service (support the service-increase recommendations in Caltrans’ California Passenger Rail System/20-Year Improvement Plan, calling for 12 daily roundtrips on the Capitols and six daily roundtrips of the San Joaquins through Contra Costa County by FY 2008/09, and earlier morning westbound trips on the San Joaquins to accommodate growth in East County)

d. Improving the quality of station services, reductions in running time, and improved on-time performance.

5-90. Improve efficiency by:

a. Improving tracks and stations to help increase the capacity of the rail system; Track improvements will also benefit freight services as well as passenger services.

5-91. Increase funding by:

a. Working for additional rail funding through efforts such as a Measure C extension and future state and federal funding cycles.

b. Shifting the emphasis of funding from highways to a greater intercity rail orientation, including alternative modes used as rail feeder services.

c. Working to change the statutory requirement for a two-thirds majority on transportation tax ballot measures to a simple majority requirement.

d. Provide greater intercity rail funding opportunities through more flexibility in funding programs.

RAILROADS IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

5-bu. Implement County Ordinance #87-19, entitled "Railroad Corridor Combining District", in a fashion which protects the integrity of the existing corridors.

5-bv. If railroad right-of-ways are abandoned by railroad service, work toward acquisition of the right-of-ways for trail development, utilities corridors, transit and for other public purposes.

5-bw. If railroad uses are to be abandoned, initiate a general plan revision study to determine the best long-term use of the right-of-ways.

5-bx. Upon notification of an action to abandon a rail line, initiate a committee of affected jurisdictions to help determine the long-term use of the rail corridor.