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## Broad scope of Lamorinda Transportation Plan presented

By Lou Fancher



Bridge offers access over highway. Photo provided

Associate Torina Wilson, who Early credited with "doing the lion's share of the work" to prepare the draft.

Early emphasized the growth management program required by the CCTA which sets the voter-approved urban limit lines and has among its objectives to keep development from encroaching on green spaces. Instead, the plans prioritize transportation development or safety improvements in urban areas that offer existing sewer, electric and water systems.

The five action plans in the county are developed by various groups and committees and have performance measures that require mitigating negative impacts of development and list projects that meet the goals related to transportation growth. Early said it is his opinion as a professional whose work is conducted statewide, that Contra Costa County has one of the most advanced and sophisticated mechanisms to ensure transportation is regional and crosses subareas and even bordering county lines without issues of imbalance.

Early highlighted key accomplishments of CCTA's Lamorinda Action Plan, such as the Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore, the Lamorinda School Bus Program, Canyon Road Bridge improvements, resurfacing and striping on Moraga Way for vehicles and bicycles, and Livable Moraga Way initiative. BART improvements, additional electric vehicle charging stations, and other street maintenance performed countywide have also contributed to improvements realized by residents of and visitors to Lamorinda.

The draft report states that during the current year and in 2024, the focus will be developing "big, bold ideas to enhance Contra Costa's transportation network." Among those big ideas are developing more countrywide multi-modal transportation, reducing the number of solo-driver vehicles on the roads, and using innovative technology and integrated management systems to improve infrastructure and increase transportation safety.

The specific action plan for Lamorinda presents up-to-date transportation issue profiles, establishes quantitative objectives, identifies significant regional routes (SROs) where service is shared with other regions and may cross into other county boundaries, provides compliance metrics, and expands goals such as equitable objectives for improvements related to climate change, safety, technology, and more. The plan was developed by a range of entities that include the cities of Lafayette and Orinda, the town of Moraga, the Lamorinda Program Management Committee (LPMC), CCTA, Caltrans, BART and other stakeholders, such as Lamorinda Program Management Committee staff and board, the Southwest Area Transportation Committee (SWAT), and members of the public.

Early offered a streamlined review of a CCTA guide (available online through links to the meeting at the city's website) that covers in detail the goals, actions, and objectives for the action plan. He said the process to formulate the program was extensive, beginning in 2021 and ongoing. He noted the presentation to the Lafayette city council was unusual - no other update forums to city councils in the five action plan areas have been conducted - and came in response to a specific request from council members.

Moving forward, Early said next steps are independent and require no action from the council, but comments and input are invited and will be considered as the CCTA reviews the draft and moves to publication of the final review document. A meeting in April of this year will move one step closer to formal acceptance of the action plans expected by late 2023 or early 2024.

Council questions included specific language and other details, such as the draft's definitions of downtown areas in the cities and town of Lamorinda and specific additions or changes to the regional significance designations of streets included in the program.

Public comments addressed gaps in the current county bus service, concerns about increased traffic volume and congestion, the possibility of shuttle-demand-based services and apps, the basis for the taxes that constitute Measure J, goals related to California's ambitious target goals for the electrification of vehicles, the possibility of new school car pool programs that link with county buses, and broad-based transportation safety issues.

Wilson said the plan includes language about implementing autonomous buses and shuttles (not specific to the question about schools, but for the general public). Kelly said any new technology referenced in the draft is constantly evolving, subject to change, and nevertheless, will remain a part of the goals and objectives in the plan. Early said reductions to bring safety metrics down to zero are goals made more complex by the multiplicity of causes for traffic accidents. Education programs and geometric improvements in dangerous areas are important actions the plan continues to include, despite the ambitious, zero-sum benchmark.

After additional clarification about how often the Action Plan will be updated in light of future housing developments and projected increased traffic congestion, especially on Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road (the CCTA reviews and updates action plans every five years), the council will send to CCTA their requests to reinsert aspirational levels of service goals for transportation corridors of highest concern and other minor comments and suggestions for consideration as the final action plan moves to completion.

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