



I-80/Central Avenue Operational Improvements Project

Project Purpose & Status

As the primary roadway connecting the El Cerrito Plaza BART station with Interstate 80 and 580, Central Avenue is a key commuter corridor. It also serves as an important local route, connecting commercial areas and local neighborhoods. However, the 0.1 mile (500 foot) section of Central Avenue between Jacuzzi and Pierce Streets is the site of significant congestion, especially during peak weekend commute times. The congestion results from the lack of adequate turn lanes/pockets and the close spacing of signalized intersections along Central Avenue.

The need for the project is based on:

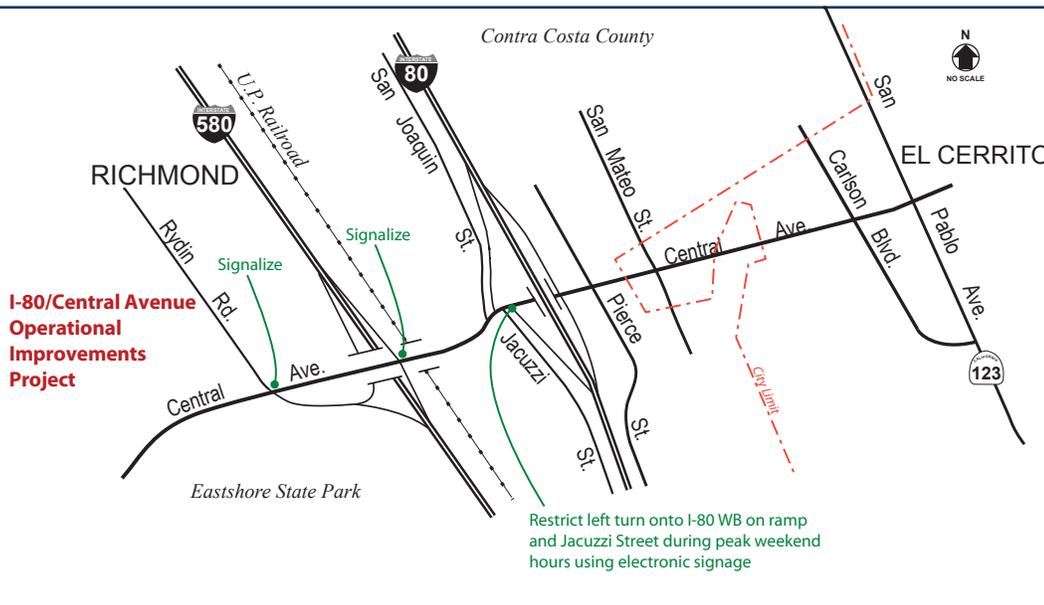
- Heavy congestion along Central Avenue during peak periods on weekdays and weekends, resulting in queues that extend east toward San Pablo Avenue;
- Existing and future poor level of service (LOS) at the I-80 ramps/intersections with Central Avenue during peak hours;
- Existing vehicle queue spillback impacts from the I-80/Central Avenue interchange onto adjacent facilities, especially in the westbound direction.

The purpose of the project is to:

- Improve traffic operations on Central Avenue so that congestion is reduced, queues are shortened, and left turn conflicts are minimized;
- Improve mobility in the Central Avenue corridor;
- Improve safety at Central Avenue intersections that have higher than average incidence of accidents;
- Consider the needs of bikes/pedestrians on Central Avenue traveling between the Bay Trail, BART, and Ohlone Way.

Seeking to enhance mobility by relieving congestion in the project area, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, their consultant team and Caltrans evaluated several alternatives to modify the freeway interchange to improve surface flow and held public meetings to gather input from the community. However, modifying the interchange has proved unattainable due to a combination of geometric and cost constraints. The Operational Improvements Project was identified and recommended during these efforts as an alternative that will not fully address the purpose and need but would provide near term congestion relief.

Project Area



Project Milestones

- Alternative Development 2007
- Public Open House 2007
- Feasibility Study 2009
- Public Open House 2010
- Operational Improvements**
- Complete Environmental Doc. 2011
- Construction 2011/2012

Project Costs

- In response to community input gathered at the public meetings for the project, low-cost fixes based on signal and access modifications were developed.
- Operational Improvements: \$2M

Project Description

The proposed Operational Improvements Project calls for eliminating the Central Avenue westbound left turn movement onto the westbound I-80 on-ramp and Jacuzzi Street during peak weekend commute times.

Electronic signs will be used to redirect drivers heading towards westbound I-80 to the nearby I-580 interchange. Drivers heading towards Jacuzzi Street will be redirected to make a u-turn at Rydin Street in order to get onto Jacuzzi Street. Additionally, new traffic signals will be installed along Central Avenue at the I-580 ramps to handle the redirected traffic.

Currently, Caltrans is leading the development of the Environmental Document for this project which is expected to be completed in 2011.

Stakeholders

