

Emily Owen

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Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:20 AM
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Subject: Public Comment – Agenda Item #4C - Countywide Broadband Strategic Plan (also including public and active transportation, land-use, and housing within the City of San Ramon) - Contra Costa Transportation Authority - Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC...

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Technical Coordinating Committee Members:

As per normative CCTA non-transparent procedure, the Countywide Broadband Strategic Plan is buried in the attached meeting materials. That said, the Executive Summary is a complete **snow job**. This so-called "**strategic**" plan does not address broadband network service gaps in unserved or underserved communities or attempt to "bridge the digital divide" (see pages 5-8 of 32 at [lata-grantee-manual-062822.pdf](#)). Contra Costa County is generally relatively affluent, and developed areas are **NOT** experiencing gaps in broadband service. At a half million dollars spent, this so-called "**strategic**" document's Comprehensive Vision to "...promote improved internet service..." is neither meaningful nor results-driven.

Instead, this is another more pervasive and deliberately hidden effort by CCTA to set up future funding for the City of San Ramon, specifically, the City's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Master Plan ([San-Ramon-ITS-Master-Plan.pdf](#)) and its signal timing fiber backbone along Bollinger Canyon Road (BCR), which purposefully intends to **INCREASE SPEEDS AND TRAFFIC FLOW**. Increasing speeds and traffic flow along BCR, where Complete Streets Initiatives and Policies supposedly exist, contradicts the purpose of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Priority Development Area designation and will be incompatible with MTC's Regional Active Transportation Network, which includes BCR.

CCTA also continues to reinforce the City of San Ramon's lack of a coordinated approach to transportation by its purposeful decision to have two City of San Ramon representatives who are responsible for traffic and transportation issues, not community development or housing, that disproportionately dominated the CCTA's Broadband Advisory Group, who was supposed to provide meaningful guidance to the consultant preparing the Countywide Broadband Strategic Plan. The assignment of two San Ramon members is not a coincidence. Neither is it a coincidence that the CCTA consultant who prepared this so-called **"strategic"** plan is the same as the one who prepared the City of San Ramon's ITS Master Plan. Project 10.1, identified as the second highest priority project in Table E-3 in the Executive Summary, is situated in relatively recently developed areas within the City of San Ramon, specifically **NOT** a community underserved by broadband service. Of course, the City of San Ramon's needs can't be the highest priority. That would be overly obvious and **"spill the beans"** on the true intent of this so-called **"strategic"** plan.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) know precisely where they will gain a substantial return on investment in building out their physical networks and gain relatively price-agnostic (due mainly to the limited competition among ISPs within California) long-term paying customers. Given San Ramon's average household income and as a resident that has coordinated the planning, design, permitting, and construction of both international submarine and terrestrial interstate, intrastate, local/middle-mile, and last-mile broadband networks for all types of network developers and service providers, I can assure you that broadband service is **NOT** lacking within the City of San Ramon, especially given the relative age of development in the areas identified in Table E-3 of the Executive Summary. Except for any adverse terrain issues, which can potentially complicate installation, broadband service is also **FAR** from lacking in Orinda—the location of the highest priority project, Project 2.1, listed in Table E-3 of the Executive Summary. The segment of Camino Pablo in Orinda between Brookwood Road and Miner Road is a collector road, not reaching into properties of significant acreage, which, similar to San Ramon, indicates considerable wealth, specifically **NOT** underserved by any measure. A golf course exists at the intersection of Camino Pablo and Miner Road. Classifying these communities as underserved is **"pure comedy."**

Again, this so-called **"strategic"** plan concerns ITS deployment and installing fiber optic cable for signal timing coordination. It is no mistake that **roads** designate the projects identified in the Executive Summary and that it hides the County's relative affluence, providing relatively few clues as to the communities involved by only labeling the jurisdictions or the "legal" entities. Also, while it may be cost-prohibitive, although certainly **NOT** for San Ramon- or Orinda-based customers, the Executive Summary does not mention the increasing availability of comparable satellite service via Dish or other higher-speed service providers.

All the above points to a more significant core issue: the Executive Summary focuses on reducing CCTA ITS infrastructure gaps, specifically **NOT** filling broadband service gaps in unserved or underserved communities. CCTA, through its consultant, is using a needs-based program to pay for additional analysis of the County's ITS infrastructure gaps, as evidenced by heavy reference to the CCTA's Countywide Smart Signals Program. (The maps included in the Executive Summary do not identify their source.) The purpose of CCTA's utilizing grant funding from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Program couldn't be **further** than providing unserved or underserved communities with broadband service and bridging the "digital divide."

I sincerely hope Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., who, given my broadband network development knowledge and experience, does not have considerable experience consulting on countywide community-serving broadband network projects, conferred with the CPUC Program staff before this perverse distortion of the plain-meaning requirements detailed in the CPUC award letter of June 30, 2023, signed by Maria I. Ellis ([Contra Costa Transportation Authority LATA award \(1\).pdf](#)) for this highly oversubscribed needs-based funding program.

ITS and broadband services to unserved and underserved communities can be jointly developed and co-located. However, that effort requires **enormous** coordination, which is not CCTA's strong suit. Still, the Executive Summary's claims about this potential connection between these two issues are **laughable**. It is more probable that Contra Costa County's and each separate jurisdiction's community development and housing specialists are more knowledgeable of where broadband service gaps exist if not non-profits like #OaklandUndivided and the Center for Accessible Technology (see [New Training Resources for CPUC Engagement on Broadband – and Beyond - California Forward](#)), precisely not a money-hungry City of San Ramon transportation services division manager and senior traffic engineer.

The so-called Countrywide Broadband Strategic Plan is not one bit **"strategic."** It takes blatant advantage of the substantially oversubscribed CPUC Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program, which is needs-based and mainly intended for unserved and underserved populations, anchor institutions, tribal entities, and agricultural regions. CCTA's use of this CPUC LTA grant funding for selfish parochial interests promulgated in this so-called **"strategic"** plan could **ruin** the future creation or refunding of any similar type of program.

I fully comprehend CCTA's role in providing transportation infrastructure within the County, but attempting to ensure broadband service to unserved and underserved communities is outside its limited experience. The same is true for providing public transportation service, save for the minimal scope of autonomous shuttle pilots, which contractors, not CCTA staff, operate. Specifically, these are time-limited PILOTS, not yet long-term self-sustaining services. This Executive Summary proves CCTA's glaring lack of experience in complex program or project coordination and persistent heavy reliance on outside consultants in planning, design, environmental review, value engineering, risk assessment, construction, compliance, and operations. CCTA's insufficient knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and propensity to be **brain-numbingly counterproductive and arrogant is displayed plain as day**. CCTA's approach to using CPUC LTA grant funds to analyze the gaps in its Countywide Smart Signals Program is almost a carbon copy of its modus operandi in supporting and funding contradictory and counterproductive transportation infrastructure within the City of San Ramon (**unproductive habits are difficult to break**).

This Executive Summary is also an extraordinary display of CCTA's lack of transparency, a gross and perverse distortion of the purpose of the CPUC LTA grant, and a misinterpretation of the data that grantees should use to identify broadband service gaps. Instead, the CCTA has used CPUC LTA funding to identify and analyze gaps in its Smart Signals Program and, specifically, to bring more certainty to the City of San Ramon's only remaining significant transportation infrastructure project need based on its current poorly communicated long-term vision to install the fiber backbone to support its signal timing coordination needs along BCR, which will further increase speeds and traffic flow along BCR, again, contradicting the explicit purpose of the BCR Iron Horse Trail (IHT) Overcrossing, ignoring both MTC's Priority Designation Area and inclusion of BCR in the MTC's Regional Active Transportation Network, and potentially providing a yet another (for a total of five recent or future) lost opportunity to take advantage of construction crew mobilizations to install connecting safe and comfortable active transportation infrastructure in and around the BCR IHT Overcrossing and City Hall.

In the classic City of San Ramon-style, it cannot self-generate revenue and, therefore, is unable to fund its needed transportation infrastructure projects. Thus, the City of San Ramon relies disproportionately on CCTA and the MTC to foot its infrastructure needs bills while doing nothing meaningful to contribute to the success of projects funded by these outside sources. The City of San Ramon's recent widening of BCR is another example of how it has contradicted the intent of the BCR IHT Overcrossing. The BCR IHT Overcrossing, funded primarily by the CCTA and MTC, is an extremely expensive architecturally significant landmark that will perpetually define the City of San Ramon. Yet, the City of San Ramon has done absolutely nothing at the north and south landing of the BCR IHT Overcrossing to logically, deliberately, safely, and comfortably connect BCR, IHT, City Hall, the City Library, and the Marketplace, even given the significant young family bicycle traffic crossing BCR at the City Hall entrance on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and after a well-known National Football League coach was run over and killed within its limits while riding his bike.

Separate from the actual design and construction of transportation infrastructure, the City of San Ramon's **lack** of a Transportation Master Plan is almost always omnipresent. The City of San Ramon **constantly flies by the seat of its pants** and therefore is motivated solely by random, ad-hoc, incoherent money grabs rather than deliberate preparation, implementation, and follow-through with anything requiring public outreach (The City of San Ramon always relies on outside consultants to perform the majority of its public outreach and consultation.) or that is coordinated, strategic, forward-looking, or in compliance with its existing consultant prepared General Plan 2024 and the California Environmental Quality Act-certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for its CityWalk Master Plan (see [CityWalk Master Plan EIR - City of San Ramon](#)).

Another example of this lack of public outreach is that no information exists on the current status of the Bike Master Plan Update on the City's website. (See the *Studies* webpage of the Transportation Services Division - [Bicycle Master Plan - City of San Ramon](#). This hyperlink is to the original April 2018 Bike Plan, not the nearly completed update.) Also, as evidenced by the Mayor's recent State of the City Address, the City focuses primarily on sprinkler heads used to water its parks. As a San Ramon resident, I couldn't be more **tickled** to know that the new additional taxes imposed on me within the City as of April 1, 2025, will be used to maintain these most vital sprinkler heads. I am resigned to this assumption because the City of San Ramon, like CCTA, has not communicated plans to create a public reporting dashboard to track Measure N revenues, project financial outlays and current expenditures, project status, and resulting public-serving outcomes. Even the federal government publically displays how it spends the public's tax dollars.

Further evidence of the City of San Ramon's glaring incessant gap of self-derived revenue reality to residents is that the City Council recently held a closed session to instruct its City Manager on how to negotiate the sale, transfer, or exchange of its Transit Center without any previous public outreach or discussion on the transaction (see City Council Meeting, Item #11 - [Agenda - Tuesday, February 11, 2025](#)), at a meeting that began just an hour after a joint meeting with the City's Planning Commission where Sunset Development Company's (Sunset) **first introduced its proposal to reduce the floor-to-area ratio** (seeking to reduce the allowable intensity of development in its "downtown" and proposing to possibly fund or develop affordable housing units off-site) within the vicinity encompassing both the existing and potentially new Transit Center (See the first Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting - Item #2.1 - [Agenda - Tuesday, February 11, 2025](#), the second Planning Commission only meeting - Item #9.1 - [Agenda - Tuesday, March 4, 2025](#), and scheduled third required Planning Commission Meeting - Item #8.1 - [Agenda - Tuesday, March 18, 2025](#)). The currently certified development plan EIR for the area,

the CityWalk Master Plan, identifies the existing San Ramon Transit Center, mentions nothing about transfer, sale, exchange, or relocation, and also identifies the creation of three additional transit hubs (specifically not Shared Mobility Hubs or Stations) in the same area (see page 3.14-21 or page 469 of 676 and Exhibit 3.14-9, or 553 out of 676, at [24910031 CityWalk General Plan Draft EIR.pdf](#)). The sale, exchange, or transfer of the City's Transit Center is a **rush job** by the City's disproportionately influential developer, Sunset, and the City Council to manipulate the current development market in the area (which, depending on market conditions, both have the potential to reap more revenue). Transportation issues and relocation of the Transit Station have not been raised during the abovementioned public meetings. Still, I am certain San Francisco Bay Area transportation and housing advocates, including San Francisco State Senator Wiener, would **NOT** support Sunset's proposal or the City Council's closed session regarding the Transit Station's sale, exchange, or transfer. On the surface, Sunset's proposal to reduce the floor-to-area ratio (reducing the allowable intensity of development and building affordable units off-site) and the City Council's sale, transfer, exchange, or relocation of the Transit Center goes against everything transportation and housing advocates hard work to increase the housing supply and attempt to reduce single-occupant commutes. As a planner, I hope these advocates are in the active stages of organizing in opposition.

Yet, the CCTA and MTC stand by silently, discounting the well-documented connection between transportation and land use. Both responsible agencies continue to fail to exercise their land-use planning responsibilities even after my repeated email messages regarding San Ramon City Council's and Sunset's recent proposals and actions.

CCTA's continued lack of transparency, gross and perverse distortion of program purpose and data, and persistent kowtowing to the City of San Ramon's incoherent, typically wasteful, and counterproductive efforts and funding demands only lead to more distrust in government at all levels by Contra Costa County taxpayers, especially at a time when all government funding is uncertain due to concerns of waste, fraud, and abuse.

Given the recent attention the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program has received, imagine the potential field day Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Chairman Texas Senator Ted Cruz would have making CCTA and MTC the Nation's laughing stock on broadband and transportation issues. (Simultaneously drawing his attention to the San Francisco Bay Area's proposed regional tax measure.)

CCTA and MTC are also ignoring all San Francisco State Senator Scott Wiener's concerted effort and yeoman's work related to connection between transportation and housing in the San Francisco Bay Area by neglecting their land use planning responsibilities and remaining silent in regards to the City of San Ramon's recent related, non-transparent transportation, land-use, housing, action and considerations to reduce the building intensity in the vicinity including its Transit Center, a potential transportation facility or regional significance, along with its lack of support in adding safe and comfortable active transportation connections to BCR IHT overcrossing that is predominately funded by the MTC and CCTA.

Indeed, CCTA and MTC are in the process of courting this uniquely federal and regional bipartisan "**odd couple**," to say the least. CCTA is also playing with federal funding fire regarding its discombobulated mess of projects, Innovate 680, which had no public information and outreach before seeking funding. Each project included in Innovate 680 has almost no separate utility to county taxpayers. CCTA is chasing money to the detriment of the ultimate purpose and usability of the project. Innovate 680 project funding is unnecessarily tangled together to exert leverage on every funding agency involved. Each of

CCTA's grant funding applications has been deliberately deceptive or conveniently has only shared a segmented portion or compartmentalized story about the entire Innovate 680 Project and focuses only on a few specific projects with each funding agency, even though each project in Innovate 680 is highly dependent on one another.

For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation has announced the dominant funding for Innovate 680 via a Mega Grant. However, this funding only relates to the express lane gap and the braided ramp system. The proposed I-680 bus service, included in Innovate 680, needs this express lane and the Part-time Transit Lanes to meet its assumed service level performance standards. Similarly, the Shared Mobility Hubs intend to attract and build express bus service ridership. The Part-Time Transit Lanes, I-680 express bus service, and Shared Mobility Hubs are all a concerted effort to **steal** riders and their associated fare revenue from (distinctly not support) other well-established public transportation systems, including BART, Amtrak, and ACERail, and the ValleyLink in the future.

However, suppose funding becomes questionable or clawed back by a separate funding agency. In that case, CCTA can then share the entire Innovate 680 project package as leverage to maintain (as arguments not to have its project funding clawed back) funding from every funding agency, as each potential funding stream determines the success of the separate agency-funded projects **AND** the entire Innovate 680 project.

In today's environment, however, what would happen if the Mega grant funding disappeared? The entire purpose and ultimate usability of each Innovate 680 project evaporates, and all funding is wasted or spent on separate **"white elephants"** with no real value to taxpayers. This waste happens when project sponsors let available funding drive project development rather than creating projects with sound purpose and need. It is arrogant and backward to tangle public funding streams together and leverage them together to fund a suite of projects in which each separate project has minimal utility or value on its own, as has been done with Innovate 680. It's not innovative. It is disingenuous and oftentimes viewed by funding agencies as a **"trap,"** which can erode the credibility and trustworthiness of CCTA to funding agencies and potentially impact the award of any future funding. Your leverage as a county public agency must only come from the money the county self-generates or its funding partners have **"raised"** or committed as a match. County public agencies must not hold funding **given** to them by a federal funding agency hostage by using other funds **given** to them by state funding agencies. The money is **given**, not self-generated, not CCTA's to use as leverage.

CCTA, through its disingenuous so-called **"strategic"** broadband plan, counterproductive Innovate 680 project, continued failures to take its land use planning responsibilities seriously (specifically in the City of San Ramon), along with its consistent funding of wildly counterproductive and contradictory transportation programs and projects in the City of San Ramon [including continuing to look the other way regarding the decimation of the level of effort exerted by the Southwest Area Transportation Committee and City of San Ramon related to Transportation Demand Management (TDM), including the dissolution of the City of San Ramon's TDM Advisory Committee, while still funding the City of San Ramon's administrative oversight via what could be considered as an annual reoccurring reimbursement contract] is in the process of creating significant regional and federal bipartisan opposition from leaders relative to its own and MTC's federal funding needs, thereby leading to more future instability for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area and eroding its own credit rating.

Sincerely,

Brian Swanson, AICP
San Ramon, California

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On Fri, Mar 14, 2025 at 9:36 AM Contra Costa Transportation Authority <info@ccta.net> wrote:

Contra Costa Transportation Authority
Meeting Update

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Greetings,

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meeting agenda for the meeting on **March 20, 2025 at 2:30 PM** is now available at [ccta.net](https://www.ccta.net).

The TCC meeting will be accessible in-person, via telephone, and live-streaming to all members of the public. For participation, please refer to the below Teleconferencing Special Notice, which can also be located on the agenda.

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2. To comment by video conference, click the “Raise Your Hand” button to request to speak when the Public Comment period is opened on an Agenda item. You will then be unmuted when it is your turn to make your comments for up to 3 minutes. After the allotted time, you will then be re-muted. Instructions for how to “Raise Your Hand” are available at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205566129-Raising-your-hand-in-webinars-and-meetings>.

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Thank you.

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