Consider receiving report and provide direction to the District’s representatives on the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee as to the District’s position on a new train stop in the City of Hercules along the Capitol Corridor Line.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On March 3, 2017, President Ortiz received a letter signed by Congressman Mike Thompson, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, Supervisor Federal Glover, Richmond Mayor Tom Butt and Hercules Mayor Myrna de Vera regarding the campaign to add a train stop in Hercules along the Capitol Corridor. Though there is not a specific request for support from AC Transit, the letter asks to support the campaign by joining the “Let’s Get I-80 Moving Coalition!”

Given the content and signatories on the letter, staff has closely analyzed the request and concluded that there is not much direct benefit or impact to AC Transit from a Hercules trains stop, and there are probably more efficient uses of funds that could benefit AC Transit’s service area.

Previous modeling has shown that adding a Capitol Corridor station in Hercules will add little ridership to the Corridor. Many of the riders would simply be redistributed from other transit modes. In addition, Capitol Corridor does not serve most employment centers. It is over two miles from Downtown Berkeley and UC Berkeley, does not serve Downtown San Francisco, and about a mile to the core of Downtown Oakland.

The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) is concerned that adding a station in Hercules would slow the train’s running time. To address the cost of Capital Corridor fares, the West Contra Costa County Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) High Capacity Transit Study is considering a 75% fare subsidy for passengers within Contra Costa County. Though this proposal should increase ridership on the train, it may not be enough to significantly reduce congestion along I-80.

In general, a new station is a relatively expensive and lengthy endeavor that will cost tens of millions of dollars to complete. At this point, this particular proposal is in need of an influx of funding to be considered a viable project.
According to the West Contra Costa High-Capacity Transit Study, a more efficient project to generate transit ridership out of Hercules would be to add express bus service. Hercules is growing more quickly than the neighboring communities, and bus service would presumably be operated by WestCAT since this is not within AC Transit’s service area. A potential solution could include express bus service to San Francisco or to Northern Alameda County (Berkeley/Emeryville/Oakland). If so, AC Transit could make a case for operating some of service. Another alternative would be to run more feeder buses to Del Norte BART, as WestCAT already does, though capacity issues on BART could preclude this idea. It is staff’s opinion that funds allocated toward a new train station could be redirected toward more effective projects or to bus transit operations.

Given these factors, staff is not fully supportive of the request, though the direct impact to AC Transit is minimal.

**BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct budgetary impact associated with a decision to support the request for a new train stop in Hercules. However, the project would use funds dedicated to transit that could otherwise be used for other purposes, including additional AC Transit express bus service.

**ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:**

The advantage of AC Transit’s support is that it helps to advance a project that would be beneficial for Hercules residents. The disadvantage is that the District would be supporting a potentially costly project with little benefit to our service area. The project could also divert funding away from improved AC Transit service.

**ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

The alternatives for Board action are to sign-up at HerculesTrainStop.com to join the “Let’s Get I-80 Moving Coalition!” or to take no action. The advantages and disadvantages to each decision are detailed in staff’s report above.

**PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:**

There are no prior relevant board actions/policies.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Hercules Train Stop Support Request Letter

Approved by: Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Acting Executive Director of Planning and Engineering
Reviewed by: Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning
Prepared by: Nathan Landau, Senior Transportation Planner
March 3, 2017

Dear Ms. Ortiz,

East Bay commuters head out the door every day only to come to a grinding halt on I-80. It is consistently ranked the most congested transportation corridor in the Bay Area. Commuters are held hostage during rush hour in both directions, as well as during off-peak hours and weekends. The impact of congestion on our quality of life and our economy is incalculable, but we all know it is significant.

I-80 is the primary route for commuters travelling north and south between Oakland and Sacramento. And our commute along the corridor is expected to increase 23% by 2040. We must implement practical and affordable solutions to get I-80 moving! Here is one of those solutions.

**Add a Train Stop in Hercules**

Adding a train stop in Hercules on the existing Capitol Corridor line would provide an easy, near-term, low-cost option to driving on I-80. The train already goes up and down the I-80 corridor; it just doesn’t stop where most of the congestion starts, particularly in the am and pm peak periods. The City of Hercules is working to create the Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, a federal, state and locally supported transportation hub that would connect this new train stop with bicycle, pedestrian, bus, and carpool service, and provide ferry service in the future. The Center would also be located within walking distance to both jobs and housing. This project would significantly improve transportation options for commuters at the junction of I-80 and Highway 4, where commute congestion often begins. Construction to date has been completed with federal, state and local funds.

In addition to serving as a stop on the Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin routes, the transportation center will act as a central point for many vital transit options, including:

- Over 30 trains daily linking West Contra Costa County to the rest of the Bay Area and the Sacramento region;
- Connections with local and regional buses;
- Interconnection between the extensive San Francisco Bay Trail and Ridge Trail;
- Potential ferry connection to San Francisco;
- Connectivity to Richmond BART and AMTRAK; and
- Park and ride carpool programs.

**Join Our Coalition**

The decision to add a train stop in Hercules is up to the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority. The CCJPA is made up of elected officials from throughout the region, including as far away as Placer and Yolo Counties. With your help, the frustration of I-80 travelers will be heard. Sign-up today at HerculesTrainStop.com to join the *Let’s Get I-80 Moving* Coalition!

[Signatures]

Congressman Mike Thompson
Congressman Mark DeSaulnier

Supervisor Federal Glover
Richmond Mayor Tom Butt
Hercules Mayor Myrna de Vera
GET I-80 MOVING
Drivers within the East Bay -- from Oakland to Vacaville -- are forced to rely on I-80 to travel to San Francisco, Alameda County, the South Bay and Sacramento. As a result, it is consistently ranked one of the most congested transportation corridors in the nation. Traffic congestion regularly plagues commuters during rush hour in both directions, as well as during off-peak hours and weekends. We must get I-80 moving to address increasingly unreliable travel times in the East Bay.

SOME QUICK FACTS ABOUT I-80 CONGESTION:
- I-80 is the primary route for commuters travelling north and south between Oakland and Sacramento.
- I-80 westbound, from Highway 4 in Hercules to the Bay Bridge toll plaza, has been the most congested transportation corridor for all but two years since Caltrans began tracking congestion in 1981.
- Commutes along the I-80 corridor are projected to increase 23% by 2040.
- Congestion on I-80 restricts mobility for local residents, negatively impacts business activity in the region, and contributes to local pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, which are expected to increase over the coming years.

ADD A TRAIN STOP IN HERCULES
Adding a train stop in Hercules on the existing Capitol Corridor line would provide an easy alternative to commuting on I-80. Currently, Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin trains pass through Hercules without stopping. The Capitol Corridor runs between Auburn and San Jose, and currently stops in key locations like Sacramento, Martinez, Berkeley, Oakland, Hayward and Santa Clara. The San Joaquin runs from Bakersfield to Sacramento with stops in Oakland, Emeryville, Richmond, Martinez, Antioch and Stockton, among others.

The City of Hercules is working to complete the Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, a transportation hub that would connect this new train stop with bicycle, pedestrian, bus and carpool service, and provide ferry service in the future. The Center is located within walking distance to both jobs and housing. This project would significantly improve transit options for commuters at the junction of I-80 and Highway 4, where commute congestion often begins.

HerculesTrainStop.com
Add a New Transportation Hub in Hercules

The Regional Intermodal Transportation Center is a multi-modal, transportation-oriented project that would deliver a variety of affordable and convenient transportation options to those traveling through West Contra Costa County and the larger region. The transportation center is a cornerstone for the Hercules Bayfront Transit Village, which is one of only 13 projects selected by the Strategic Growth Council of the State of California as a "California Catalyst Project."

In addition to serving as a stop on the Capitol Corridor, the transportation center will act as a central point for vital transportation options.

THE TRANSPORTATION CENTER WOULD INCLUDE:

- 38 trains daily linking West Contra Costa County to the rest of the Bay Area and the Sacramento region;
- Connections with local and regional buses;
- Potential ferry connection to San Francisco;
- Connectivity to Richmond BART and Amtrak; and
- Park and ride carpool programs.

By creating connections between the extensive San Francisco Bay Trail and Ridge Trail networks, the center will connect pedestrian and bicycle pathways, which will improve access and accessibility to non-drivers, seniors and people with disabilities and communities of concern.

The project provides an environmentally sustainable solution to addressing congestion on I-80. By reducing the number of cars and trucks on the road, it would contribute to less air pollution, energy use, and fuel consumption. The center would also promote parking for electric vehicles and "car share," and provide easy access for bicycle and pedestrians on the San Francisco Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail. Additionally, the center will open the door to commuters who rely on transportation with timed transfers for local and regional buses.

The transportation center will be located along Bayfront Boulevard at the end of John Muir Parkway in the City of Hercules. The location is directly adjacent to the Bayfront Transit Village, a new community planned with 1,400 residential units and 340,000 square feet of retail, commercial office, and additional industrial or office space. Hercules has already proven to be a popular location for commuters seeking alternatives to I-80 through express buses to the Transbay Terminal and El Cerrito del Norte BART Station, together with informal carpooling.

The first phases of the project, which entail initial station site preparation, access improvements, flood protection for the station site and track, and segments of the San Francisco Bay Trail are nearing completion. Once funding is acquired for the final phase, the project would be completed within three to five years.

TAKE ACTION

Adding a train stop in Hercules will help reduce debilitating traffic on I-80 and boost the region's economy. The early phases of the project are already complete, making it a tangible and near-term solution to the East Bay's complex traffic congestion issues. With your help, we can reduce the severe traffic congestion in the Bay Area's most jammed transportation corridor. Show your support for a train stop in Hercules by signing up today!

HerculesTrainStop.com

Let's Get Moving!

Add a Train Stop in Hercules