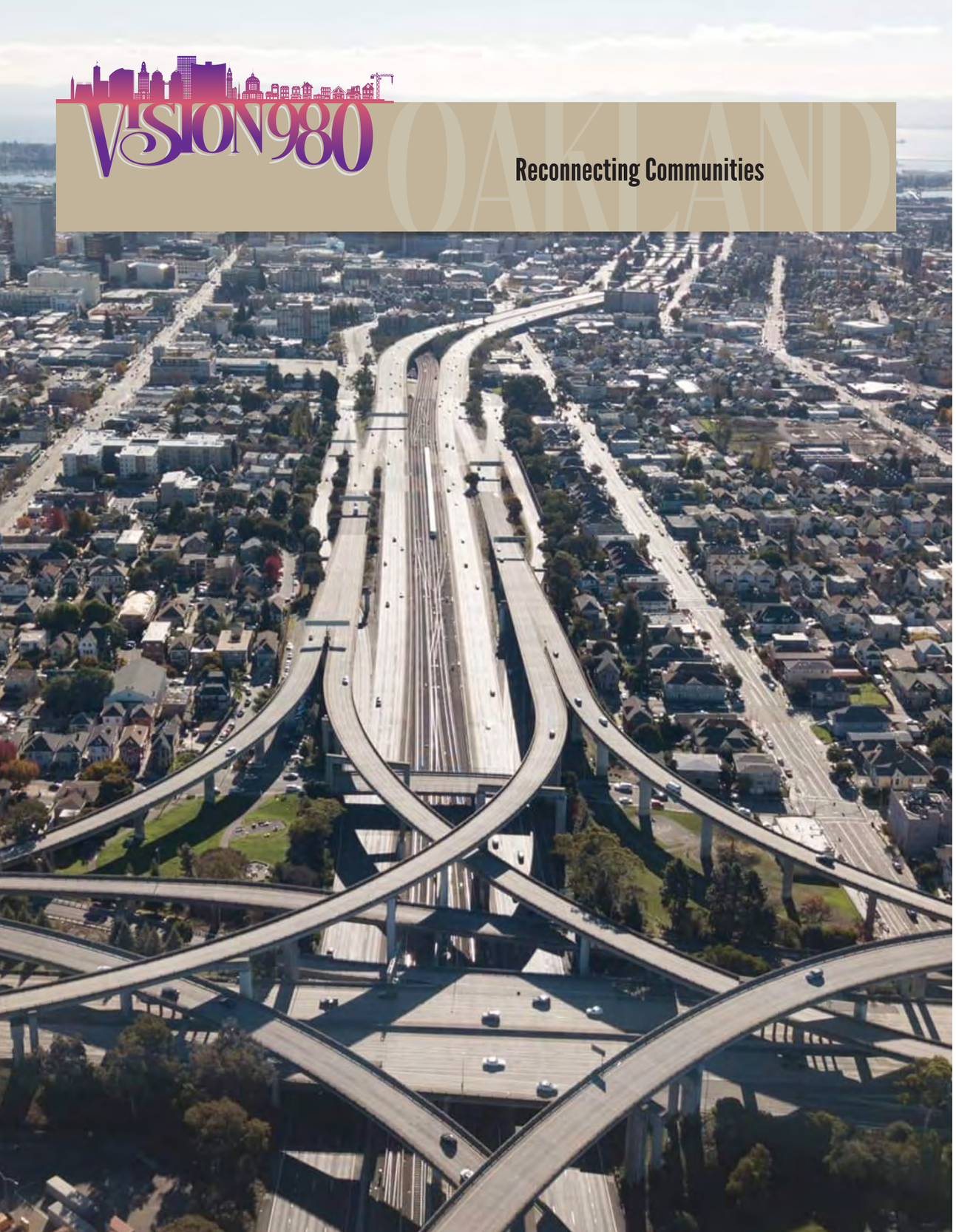
Vision 980 Study - Phase 1 Report

I-980 Corridor Alternatives Study

Updated: November 2025



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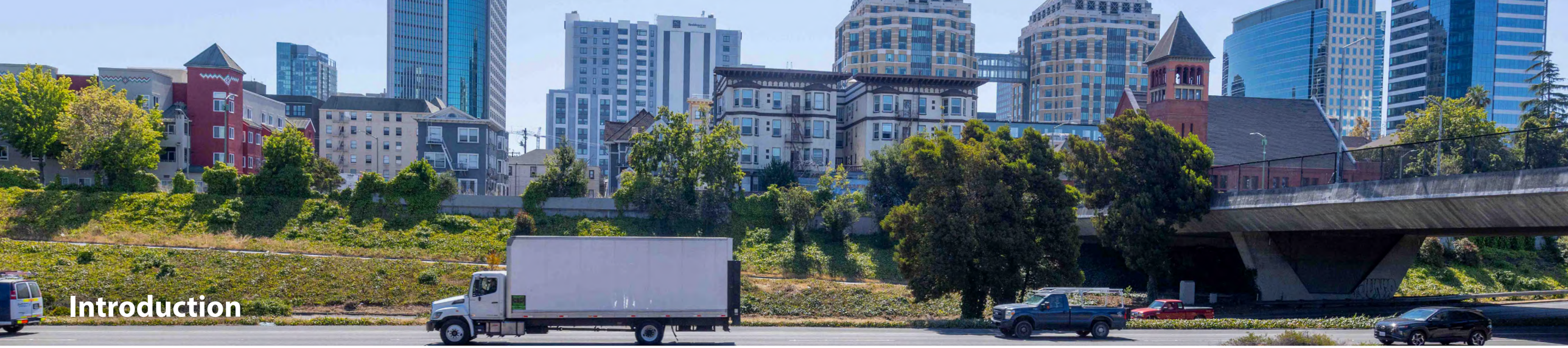
Introduction



Introduction

This report presents the work completed for the Vision 980 Study - Phase 1. The study explored alternatives for reconnecting communities along the Interstate (I-) 980 corridor with an expanded focus on community involvement and environmental justice to deliver more equitable outcomes for the City of Oakland, Bay Area region, and State of California. The study examined the corridor from a comprehensive, multimodal, regional, and most importantly community-based perspective in order to develop and recommend a new collective land use and transportation vision for the corridor. This vision was formed through continuous and meaningful collaboration with Study Partners, including the Alameda County Transportation Commission (CTC), City of Oakland, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), other stakeholders, and the public. As a Reconnecting Communities project, the study sought to help Caltrans and other agency partners understand the division and disruption caused in the West Oakland community, including the freeway's impacts on community vibrancy, and the historic pattern of community (under) investment.

I-980 has a history of impacting and dividing disadvantaged communities in Oakland. The freeway was intended to provide direct access to downtown Oakland, which was undergoing redevelopment at the time. Its construction started in the 1960s, was temporarily halted by an injunction in 1972, and was completed in 1985. An important part of the study involved acknowledging past injustices to disadvantaged communities while also seeking to correct and mitigate those mistakes and repair harm going forward. The study also serves as an important part of delivering on the State's commitment to racial and social equity. Most importantly, the study aimed to confront the consequences of past governmental policies, restore trust, and redefine the role of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a community partner.

Supporting Caltrans was a multi-faceted and diverse consultant team consisting of WSP, Arup, and RBA Creative. RBA Creative, an Oakland-based, Black, family-owned communications consulting firm, led the multi-pronged and comprehensive outreach and engagement approach that is outlined later in this report. The study team also included the integration of three community-based organizations (CBOs) as subconsultants:

- Urban Strategies Council, a policy research and advocacy organization focused on advancing positive health, economic, and educational outcomes in communities of color.
- West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP), a resident-led, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving healthy homes, healthy jobs, and healthy neighborhoods in West Oakland, founded by Ms. Margaret Gordon.
- Baywell Health (formerly West Oakland Health Council), an anchor in the community for healthcare, health education, food and housing programs, and voter registration for over 50 years.

These CBOs were consulted frequently throughout the study's development to leverage their expertise and close ties within the West Oakland community. The three CBO subconsultants also served on the study's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

This report comprises the following sections:

- **Study Goals and Objectives:** presents the process and results of the goals and objectives that were developed by the TAC.
- **Study Area and Corridor Analysis:** analyzes the existing conditions within the study area including underserved communities, air quality and environmental conditions, existing and future land use, and the overall transportation network.
- **Outreach and Engagement:** summarizes the results of the various activities conducted to engage with the public and stakeholders.
- **Scenario Development:** outlines the process for developing the three corridor scenarios that were presented to the public and stakeholders.
- **Scenario Evaluation and Recommended Corridor Concept/Vision:** recaps the evaluation of the three corridor scenarios and presents the recommended concept/vision that will be carried into Phase 2.
- **Next Steps:** previews the work that will be completed for Phase 2 of the study.

The following technical memorandums completed for the study are either located on the study website or available on request:[1]

- Task 2A. Corridor Issues
- Task 2B. Goals and Objectives
- Task 2D. Evaluation Framework and Equity-Based Performance Measures
- Task 3A. Data Summary
- Task 3B. Equity Assessment
- Task 3C. & 3D. Current and Future Baseline Conditions Story Map
- Task 5. Engagement Activity Report #1 and #2
- Task 6A. Develop Scenarios and 6B. Visualizations
- Task 6C. Evaluation
- Task 7A. Identify Corridor Concept and Vision and 7B. Provide Future Recommendations

1 https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-projects/vision-980

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Study Goals and Objectives

Study Goals and Objectives[2]

The first step of the study involved developing a set of goals and objectives to guide the development of the study. The goals and objectives formed a roadmap for the study team to realize the community-led vision for the corridor and were incorporated into the evaluation of the three corridor scenarios. A workshop was conducted with the study team and the TAC to determine the goals and objectives, which are shown in Table 1 (the Phase 1 TAC included six CBO representatives and ten public-agency representatives outside of Caltrans). Each goal has a set of associated objectives that define more short-term and measurable actions that will achieve the associated goal. The objectives focus on exploration, planning, and level-setting commensurate with the decision-making characteristic of the early stages of a public project.

A framework was developed for these goals and objectives to guide the work in all future study phases across the full lifecycle of Vision 980. The framework is explained as follows:

- The goals defined during this phase of the study are evergreen and should continue to be followed through future phases of work. The goals are (and any future goals will be) defined by Caltrans in partnership with CBOs and regional stakeholders.
- At every new study phase, Caltrans and its Study Partners should develop a new set of objectives to achieve within that specific phase that aligns with the overall study goals.
- While goals established during this phase are intended to be applicable in future phases, it does not preclude the creation of new goals in future phases.
- The goals and objectives were referenced throughout Phase 1 by Caltrans, its study team, and the TAC to ensure the guidance was actively utilized.

Table 1. Phase 1 Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective
CREATE community-informed transportation+ project concepts that address transportation, housing, economic development, parks, and culture to improve all aspects of quality of life in Oakland	Collaborate with the West Oakland communities to define "reconnect" to inform concepts
	Develop multimodal transportation solutions and complete streets that improve options and road safety for the West Oakland community and connect to existing bus and rail services
	Align land use to the vision for housing, economic development, and parks developed in Phase 1, including types, scale, and location
	Identify and include alternatives to address basic infrastructure gaps with project concepts
	Identify community assets to preserve, improve connection to, or center in concepts
	Leverage infill and activation opportunities of vacant and underutilized land to improve or eliminate public safety and public health issues that occur in those spaces

2 More information can be found in the technical memorandum for Task 2B. Goals and Objectives.

Table 1. Phase 1 Goals and Objectives (continued)

Goal	Objective
DEVELOP equity outcomes that directly benefit West Oakland residents, exceeding compliance with Title VI, the National Environmental Policy Act, and disadvantaged business enterprise regulations, or the status quo of reducing harm	Acknowledge and address the trauma experienced by legacy Black West Oakland residents with harm repair strategies that make amends for the negative impact I-980 continues to have on them, and lead intra-agency and inter-agency dialogues on how to manifest the harm repair strategies
	Develop equity metrics to measure progress on achieving various equitable outcomes
	Identify different audience groups within the community to create benefits commensurate to their lived experiences
	Engage the community and TAC to inform equity metrics and equitable outcomes
	Foster ongoing learning from inspiring Reconnecting Communities projects with effective or innovative equity approaches nationally
FOSTER a more sustainable West Oakland neighborhood by addressing corridor-induced environmental trauma like air quality, urban heat, and public health outcomes, and planning resilient new infrastructure	Explore the project alternative of complete removal of the freeway corridor along with traffic engineering options that do not route or divert traffic onto other West Oakland neighborhood streets
	Identify environmental risks and mitigations for deconstruction and new construction in project concepts, whether freeway corridor removal or other options
	Include green infrastructure strategies to improve fresh oxygen sources, manage stormwater, create heat-absorbent streets and large surface areas, and more
	Explore circular economy opportunities to repurpose materials that currently exist in West Oakland, whether they give new purpose to what would otherwise become non-biodegradable waste or preserve a piece of West Oakland history and culture
IDENTIFY public policies to achieve anti-displacement and anti-gentrification project concepts, and create project policies that bring project workforce opportunities to West Oakland residents	Understand policy gaps that have allowed past and present displacement and gentrification and engage the appropriate public agency on ways to bridge the gaps
	Identify policies that will align private sector partners to anti-displacement and anti-gentrification goals, including developers, micromobility companies, and similar groups
	Develop a community agreement with a signatory pledge from the appropriate agencies committing to program policies to prioritize West Oakland residents for project workforce opportunities
ENGAGE the community with humility to earn a meaningful and long-lasting relationship that empowers co-creation and collaboration from visioning through implementation	Extend a public acknowledgment from Caltrans to the West Oakland community to communicate a meaningful understanding of the harmful decision-making that allowed the construction of I-980 and the types of generational traumas the infrastructure caused
	Conduct inclusive engagement that centers West Oakland residents early and often, creating space for dialogue, imagination, and problem-solving with the community
	Foster transparency on project funding, planning processes, and tradeoffs of different technical approaches to build public trust and inform the co-creation of project concepts
	Include West Oakland CBOs in stakeholder meetings, creating a balance of CBOs and public agency staff to ensure representation of the community voice

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Study Area and Corridor Analysis

Study Area and Corridor Analysis[3]

Study Area Definition

Following the development of the goals and objectives, the study team defined the study area. This included the downtown and West Oakland neighborhoods in the City of Oakland bordered by West MacArthur Boulevard to the north, Broadway to the east, 3rd Street to the south, and I-880 to the west, as shown in Figure 1. The area includes 25 Census tracts of which 15 are considered disadvantaged by the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Community and Economic and Environmental Development Justice Tool. The area includes neighborhoods and community assets along the I-980 corridor, which aligns with U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program best practices to strategically reconnect and improve residents' livelihoods who were divided by construction of a highway. Finally, the study area also includes portions of downtown and West Oakland which were significantly impacted by the construction of I-980; including these areas allowed the study team to effectively assess existing conditions.

Figure 1. Study Area

3 More information can be found in the technical memorandum for Task 2A. Corridor Issues and StoryMap for Task 3C. I-980 Corridor System Profiles (Current Baseline Conditions) and 3D. I-980 Corridor System Profiles (Future Baseline Conditions).

Historical Review and Context[4]

Initial planning for what would become I-980 began in 1927. Government agencies studied multiple routes for a potential San Francisco to Oakland Bay Bridge, including an alignment through West Oakland. The current alignment through Yerba Buena Island was ultimately chosen, but this early route analysis set the stage for future plans to create regional transportation facilities cutting through West Oakland. West Oakland was a convenient location for the eastern approach to the bridge since it was one of the East Bay neighborhoods closest to the central business district of San Francisco, which was home to many major employers and other key trip generators.

Prior to the construction of I-980, West Oakland was a vibrant and active community whose growth was aided by the increase in manufacturing and shipping jobs tied to World War II. As shown in Figure 2, 7th Street served as the primary commercial and cultural corridor for the neighborhood with several music venues and thriving Black-owned businesses, including retail and service-based enterprises. The Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) wartime housing was restricted to white workers, so new Black families arriving from the Deep South (states such as Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia) were concentrated in West Oakland. Further, at the time, the FHA employed a practice called redlining, which included identifying loans as economically unsound if a property was in a neighborhood that was, or might become, populated by Black people.

As White Flight and suburbanization took hold after the war, government decisions prioritized high-speed, high-capacity transportation facilities to move people efficiently and quickly into and out of cities such as San Francisco. The FHA Underwriting Manual noted that highways were "effective in protecting a neighborhood and the locations within it from… inharmonious racial groups." This led to the selection of freeway alignments that cut through low-income, predominantly Black communities due to their designation as locations

Figure 2. 7th Street and Pine Street in West Oakland in 1920[5]

of "blight." These freeways also intentionally created barriers between Black residents and other parts of cities, including predominately white neighborhoods and central business districts. The specific routing of I-980 was chosen to connect the then recently completed Grove-Shafter Freeway (State Route (SR) 24) and Cypress Freeway (I-880). What came to be I-980 was originally referred to as an extension of SR 24 and was intended to connect with an eventual second crossing of the bay connecting San Francisco and the East Bay that was never built. Ultimately, this involved taking over 42 acres of property, including the removal of 503 houses, 155 trees, four churches, 22 businesses, and 142 jobs.

Construction of the freeway began in 1968 and was completed in 1985. As the community was being razed for construction of the freeway, residents sued the City of Oakland to demand replacement of the houses slated for demolition. For much of the 1970s, demolition of properties for the full span of the freeway was halted because of this lawsuit, leaving just the elevated freeway segment ending at 18th Street as shown in Figure 3.

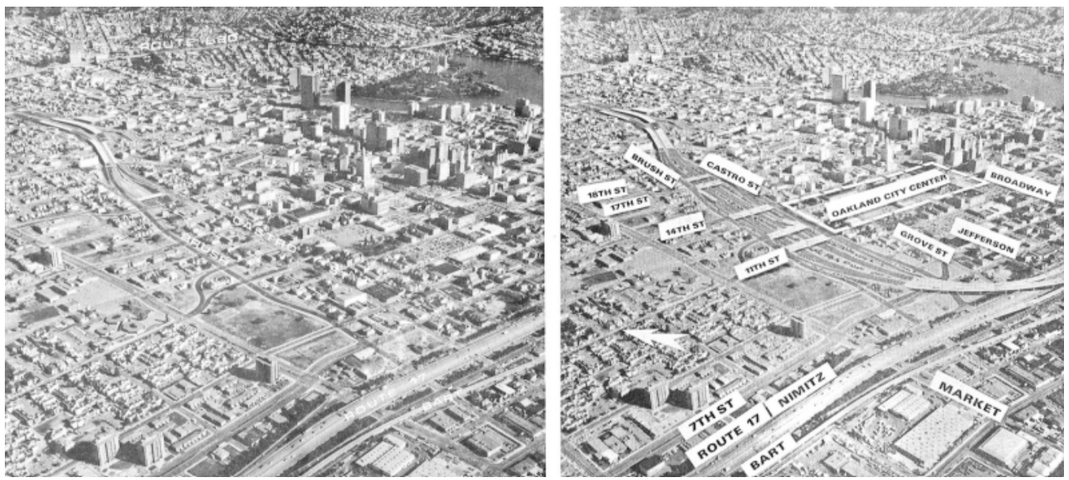
4 Source: "Connect Oakland: A Vision to Reconnect Neighborhoods and Connect Cities", Connect Oakland, 2024, http://www.connectoakland.org/, "Interstate 980", AARoads, 2018, https://www.aaroads.com/guides/i-980-ca/, "Interstate 980", Donald P. Faigin, 2020, https://www.cahighways.org/ROUTE980.html, "Oakland | I-980", Congress for New Urbanism, 2024, https://www.cnu.org/highways-boulevards/campaign-cities/oakland-980, "Redlining", Federal Reserve History, 2023, https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/redlining, and "Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act", FHA, 1938, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/title/underwriting-manual-6279/underwriting-manual-602319.

5 Source: Oakland Public Library.

Figure 3. Status of I-980 in 1973[6]

Following years of inactivity, business interests lobbied the Governor of California to restart construction of the full alignment to create improved access to Oakland's City Center development. Construction resumed, albeit with a sunken design to mitigate some neighborhood impacts. The freeway became a federal highway in 1983 and was added to the California State Highway System in 1984. The final segment of the freeway opened in March 1985. Figure 4 shows the path the freeway took cutting through West Oakland.

Figure 4. Before and After Completion of I-980[7] " (image on left is mid-construction)



6 Source: California Department of Transportation.

7 Source: "West Oakland", ConnectOakland, 2015, http://www.connectoakland.org/history/west-oakland/.

Relevant Planning Activities

The following plans and programs were referred to during the course of the study due to their proximity and relevance to the study area.

- Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (2024)
- West Oakland Truck Management Plan (2019)
- West Oakland Community Action Plan (2019)
- Let's Bike Oakland (2019)
- Interstate 980 Transportation Concept Report (2017)
- Oakland Walks! (2017)
- West Oakland Specific Plan (2014)

Existing Conditions

The study area includes over 33,000 households and over 45,000 jobs, representing a significant portion of the total city with 16% of all households and 23% of all jobs. Residents in the study area have a higher likelihood of living in poverty, with 41% of the population falling below the Federal Poverty Line, which is substantially higher than the countywide average of 22%. Compared to the rest of the city, the population within the study area is more likely to have a disability, have single-female-led households, and rent their homes rather than own.

Equity Communities

To better understand the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges in the study area, a methodology was developed to identify equity communities in the area. Equity communities include areas with higher concentrations of people of color, low-income populations, residents with disabilities, and single female-led households. These communities have also been disproportionately impacted by the legacy of past decisions including the poor air quality introduced by I-980, limited access to more desirable residential neighborhoods and major job centers from redlining, overt disinvestment, over policing, and more. Areas with higher proportions of these populations include the Hoover-Foster/Pine Hill, Clawson/South Prescott, McClymonds, and Oak Center neighborhoods.

Air Quality and Environmental Challenges

West Oakland's industrial roots date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when it became a hub for shipping, manufacturing, and railroads.

Today, the legacy of heavy industry, combined with the proximity to the Port of Oakland and major freeways, contributes to high levels of air and noise pollution. Residents are exposed to elevated concentrations of diesel particulate matter and other pollutants, leading to serious health issues such as asthma, heart disease, and respiratory problems.[8] As shown in Figure 5, values are substantially higher in the study area for diesel particulate matter (DPM), nitrogen dioxide, and toxic releases compared to citywide and countywide averages. The neighborhood is part of the California Air Resources Board's Community Air Protection Program, aimed at minimizing the impact of air pollution in the most affected communities. Given the proximity to the Port of Oakland and regional freeways, the study area also has higher noise exposure compared to the citywide and countywide averages, especially in the Prescott, Clawson, Northgate, and Pill Hill neighborhoods.

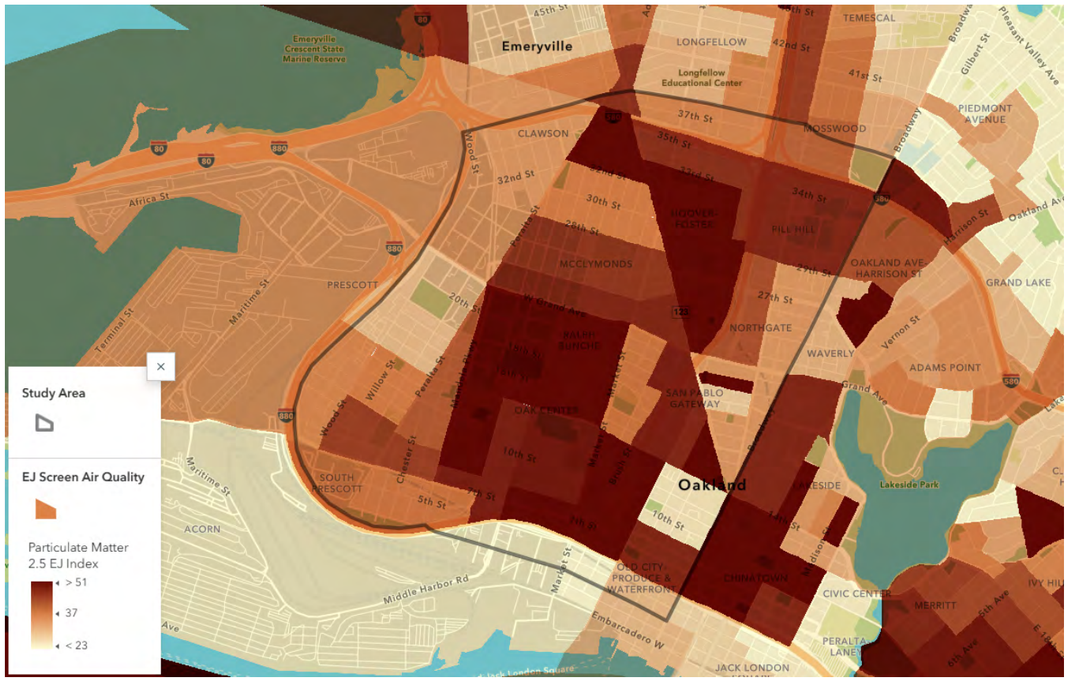
8 Source: "How pollution impacts health in West Oakland", Environmental Defense Fund, 2024, https://www.edf.org/airqualitymaps/oakland/pollution-and-health-concerns-west-oakland.

Existing and Future Land Use

The percentage of vacant households in the I-980 corridor serves as a key indicator of housing demand and underutilization, providing insights into potential opportunities for redevelopment or adaptive reuse of existing properties. The areas with the highest residential vacancy rates are concentrated in several key locations along the corridor, including near I-880, West Oakland south of 7th Street, adjacent to I-980 south of West Grand Avenue, and downtown Oakland west of Harrison Street.

The City of Oakland's General Plan serves as a long-term guide for land use, growth, and development across the city, including areas within the I-980 corridor. As shown in Figure 6, some of the key zones and existing features include mixed-use, residential, commercial, and industrial zoning.

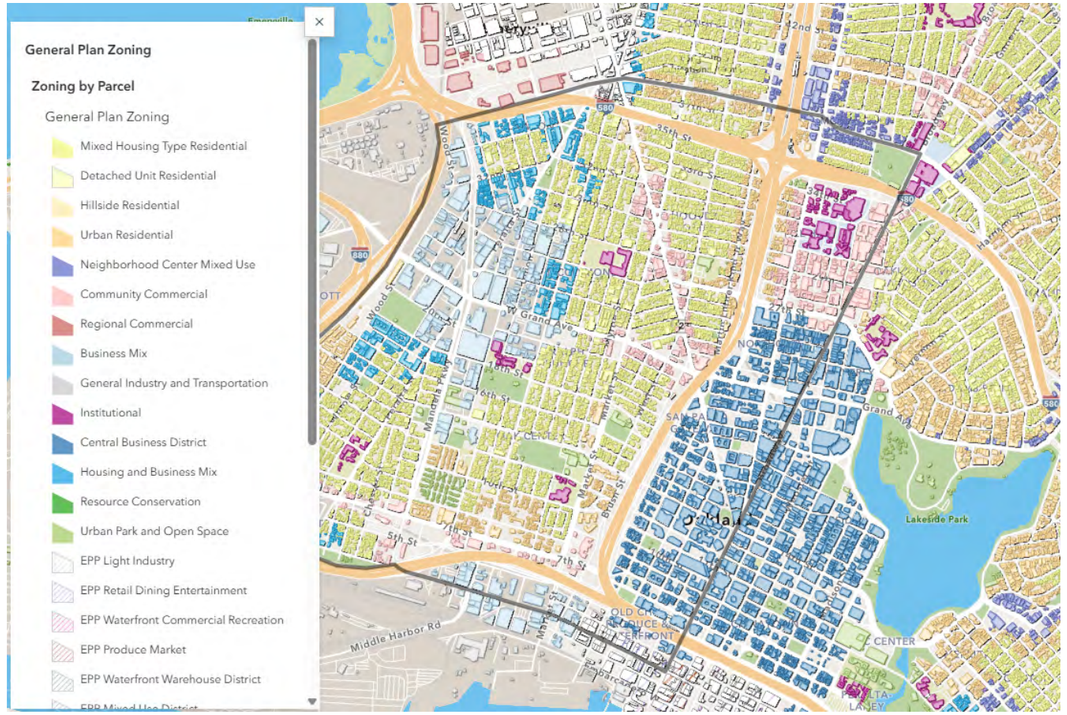
Figure 5. Particulate Matter 2.5



Employment in Oakland, particularly near the I-980 corridor, is highly concentrated. The dense employment base downtown supports demand for housing and services in surrounding areas. Nearby neighborhoods like Jack London Square and West Oakland have pockets of employment opportunities. Areas west of I-980 are designated Opportunity Zones and can stimulate development in neighborhoods around downtown.

Based on the Plan Bay Area 2050 growth forecast, significant population and employment growth is expected by 2035, particularly along the Broadway corridor, as well as the South Prescott and Clawson neighborhoods in West Oakland. These areas are projected to see intensified land uses based on the city's General Plan, Downtown Oakland Specific Plan, and West Oakland Specific Plan zoning, with growth driven by development incentives and state population forecasts. The forecasts highlight the potential for higher-density housing and job creation in these neighborhoods within the study area, as well as increased travel using all modes of transportation.

Figure 6. Existing Zoning Designations

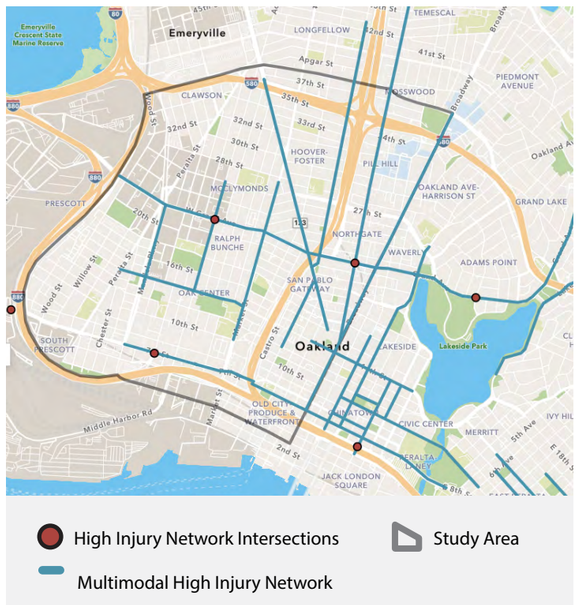


Transportation Networks, Performance, and Travel Behavior

Households within the study area have a higher likelihood of owning either zero or only one vehicle per household when compared to citywide and countywide averages. The Northgate and Pill Hill neighborhoods have the highest rates of zero-vehicle households in the study area.

As shown in Figure 7, several streets in the study area, including West Grand Avenue, 7th Street, and 14th Street, are classified on the City of Oakland High Injury Network (HIN) and require design interventions to make it safer to walk and bike along those corridors. The city's multimodal HIN includes streets and intersections that have the highest concentrations of severe and fatal traffic crashes. HIN streets represent eight percent of the streets that are responsible for 60% of all severe and fatal crashes citywide.

Figure 7. High-Injury Network



Per Replica (a third-party data vendor) travel demand data, most trips that originate in the study area have a destination within the study area; meaning they are internal and short trips. Outside the study area, most trips are destined for downtown San Francisco/ San Francisco's Financial District, Emeryville, East Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK AND PERFORMANCE

About 18% of all trips that originate in the study area are taken by pedestrians, slightly higher than the citywide (16%) and countywide (15%) averages. The Hoover-Foster, Oak Center, and San Pablo Gateway neighborhoods have the highest walk mode split in the study area with about 24% pedestrian mode share. While the study area has a relatively well-connected street network to support this pedestrian activity, sidewalk quality and traffic safety issues that negatively impact pedestrian activity have been identified in the City of Oakland's 2017 Pedestrian Plan Update. Pedestrian connectivity is particularly impacted by I-980, limiting pedestrian access between downtown Oakland and West Oakland. Between 2017 and 2022, there were almost 300 crashes involving pedestrians in the study area. Crash locations involving pedestrians were primarily concentrated along Broadway, Telegraph Avenue, and San Pablo Avenue.

Except for the start and end of I-980, every ramp connects to a street that is close to an intersection; making these intersections and their resulting crossing distances for pedestrians excessively wide. The short distance between ramps both on the freeway mainline and at adjacent surface streets, coupled with the absence of auxiliary lanes, reduces the space and time available for a driver to decide to leave a captured lane, promoting risky and unpredictable behavior. It also contributes to congestion on both networks due to the friction generated by frequent merging for on and off ramps.

BIKE NETWORK AND PERFORMANCE

The majority of the bike facilities in the study area are unprotected bike lanes that would benefit from upgrades to make more people feel safe and comfortable biking. The Oak Center and Ralph Bunche neighborhoods have the highest bike mode split with about eight percent of all trips taken by bike in those areas.

Many current bike routes in the study area are Class II (bike lanes), with plans to improve them to Class I (separated paths) or Class IV (protected bike lanes) for increased safety.

Almost 200 bicycle crashes have occurred in the study area over the last five years. Most of these occurred on Broadway, Telegraph Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, West Grand Avenue, and at the I-980 ramps at 11th Street, 12th Street, 18th Street, and Northgate Avenue. Given the high amount of freight vehicle traffic coming to and from the Port of Oakland, pavement conditions have degraded on several streets in the study area including on Brush Street, Poplar Street, West Grand Avenue, and 18th Street, which can contribute to unsafe bicycling conditions.

TRANSIT NETWORK AND PERFORMANCE

Downtown Oakland and West Oakland benefit from excellent local and regional transit service. Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) service is provided at the West Oakland Station, 12th Street Oakland City Center Station, and 19th Street Oakland Station, with frequent regional rapid transit connections to downtown San Francisco, Berkeley, and elsewhere in the Bay Area. The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) provides rapid, express, early bird express, and local bus service throughout the study area, connecting West Oakland and downtown to the rest of Alameda County and San Francisco. The Water Emergency Transportation Authority operates ferry service connecting Jack London Square to Alameda, downtown San Francisco, and South San Francisco. The Amtrak station at Jack London Square provides regional rail service, connecting the study area to Sacramento, San Jose, Seattle, and Los Angeles.

Given the proximity to frequent transit service, transit is the third most popular mode behind driving and walking in the study area, with about four percent of all trips taken by bus, rail, or ferry. Transit mode split is highest in downtown Oakland compared with the study area, with about nine percent of all trips taken by transit.

The highest frequency AC Transit bus stops are located along Broadway and 7th Street near the West Oakland BART Station, with buses arriving on average every ten minutes or less during peak commute times. Buses serving San Pablo Avenue typically arrive every ten to 15 minutes. The lowest transit frequency is on Adeline Street with buses only arriving between 15 to 30 minutes.

In 2009, AC Transit conducted an inventory of stop amenities. Many of the bus stops outside the Broadway corridor in the study area have either a bench only or no stop amenities, which can negatively impact the rider experience.

AUTO NETWORK AND PERFORMANCE

The segment of I-980 at 18th Street has the highest total traffic of the corridor with about 110,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic.[9] All volumes have slightly decreased between 2019 and 2022, given the effects of the pandemic on travel behavior. Some segments of the I-980 corridor did not have data available for all directions and years. Generally, the I-980 corridor rarely experiences congestion, but a more detailed study is required using updated traffic counts, rather than estimates, to determine excess vehicle capacity.

The I-980 westbound on-ramp from I-580 has the highest ramp volume with about 22,000 average daily trips. Local ramps, connecting I-980 to the local street network at 12th Street, 18th Street, and 19th Street all have relatively low volumes. For reference, the I-580 ramps are designed for about 48,000 vehicles over a 24-hour period, indicating all operate well below their design capacity. Traffic volume data was reflective of what was currently available and further traffic analysis should be conducted as part of Phase 2 of the study.

FREIGHT NETWORK AND PERFORMANCE

The Port of Oakland, located in West Oakland, is one of the busiest container ports in the United States, handling a significant portion of the country's imports and exports. However, freight traffic and Port operations present negative environmental and health impacts to West Oakland's residents. The study area experiences high levels of air pollution, including DPM and nitrogen oxides from truck traffic, ships, and trains. About 6,000 trucks per day use I-980, contributing to local pollution issues.

As a proxy for truck trips to and from the Port, Replica data was utilized and segmented for commercial vehicle (freight) trips to identify the network links with the highest freight volumes in the study area that have a trip origin at the Port. Most commercial vehicle traffic heading to or from the Port is located on the principal freeways, including I-580, I-80, and I-880. West Grand Avenue, 11th Street, and 12th Street are also heavily traveled corridors for commercial trips heading to or from the Port, according to Replica data. These are trips that originate at the Port and are different than the estimate of 6,000 daily freight trips on I-980 from the Caltrans Annual Traffic Census.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

As shown in the City of Oakland's 2019 Let's Bike Oakland plan, key corridors set to receive well-connected Class I facilities include San Pablo Avenue, Adeline Street, and West Grand Avenue, while Class II buffered lanes are proposed along Peralta Street and Mandela Parkway. The proposed bike infrastructure projects in Oakland, particularly the upgrades along key east-west corridors like San Pablo Avenue, West Grand Avenue, 14th Street, and 7th Street, aim to improve safety and connectivity for cyclists.

As shown below, further transportation improvements have been identified in the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan and the West Oakland Specific Plan, including:

- West Oakland Industrial Streets (Rail Removal)
- West Oakland Link (led by MTC)
- West Oakland Transit Access Improvements
- 14th Street Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
- Safe Routes to Schools Improvements – MLK Jr. Elementary School
- 7th Street Connection Project
- MacArthur Smart City Corridor Project (Phase 2)
- 14th Street Safety Project

9 This is calculated as the total volume for the year divided by 365.

4

Outreach and Engagement

Outreach And Engagement[10]

Conducting ongoing, transparent, and meaningful engagement and education with the public and stakeholders was a key component of the study. The study team prioritized listening to the public and stakeholders and confirmed that the study is the beginning of a deliberate, focused, and long-term sincere effort to build a new vision for the freeway in West Oakland. In all engagement efforts, the study team focused on acknowledging past injustices to underserved and priority communities and seeking to repair harm caused by those mistakes. The study aimed to rebuild trust and redefine Caltrans' role by engaging communities and addressing past government policies.

Engagement was driven by the following set of objectives:

- Engage diverse audiences (focusing on West Oakland residents and legacy families)
- Involve community organizations
- Maintain a consistent feedback loop
- Cast a wide net to maximize both awareness and participation

Stakeholder Engagement

Community-Based Organizations

As previously mentioned, the study team included staff from the following CBOs: Baywell Health, Urban Strategies Council, and WOEIP.

The inclusion of these CBOs provided the study team with trusted and active local partners that are focused on improving the lives and well-being of residents within the City of Oakland. The CBOs participated in TAC meetings, reviewed technical deliverables, and helped solicit public input and feedback.

10 More information can be found in engagement activity report #1 and #2. Reports #1 and 2 are available on the Vision 980 website.

Technical Advisory Committee

The TAC was developed to provide input on the study at critical project milestones. The TAC provided feedback on the technical materials provided by the study team and helped guide the direction of study. Table 2 provides the makeup of the TAC.

Table 2. Technical Advisory Committee Members

Organization	Name
AC Transit	Casey Bruno
Alameda County Public Health Department	Tram Nguyen and Denzel Tongue
Alameda CTC	Shannon McCarthy and Grasielita Diaz
ArtEsteem	Amana Harris
Bay Area Air Quality Management District	David Ralston
BART	Darin Ranelletti and Seung-Yen Hong
Baywell Health	Robert Phillips
Capacity for Equity and Success	Letitia Henderson
City of Oakland: Department of Transportation	Acacia Dupierre
City of Oakland: Planning & Building Department	Laura Kaminski
City of Oakland: Race & Equity Department	Jacque Larrainzar
MTC	Natasha Opfell and Anup Tapase
Port of Oakland	Radiah Victor
Urban Strategies Council	David Harris
West Oakland Cultural Action Network	David Peters
WOEIP	Ms. Margaret Gordon

The TAC met four times throughout the duration of the study and participated in workshops for the determination of the study's goals and objectives and evaluation framework/equity-performance measures:

- **June 2024:** project introduction
- **March 2025:** existing conditions, engagement round 1, and corridor scenarios
- **August 2025:** engagement round 2
- **October 2025:** corridor scenario evaluation and equity assessment results and Phase 2 preview

Public Engagement

A phased approach to public engagement was developed to create an iterative process where feedback from each round was adequately addressed in the development of technical deliverables and provided an opportunity to demonstrate how feedback was utilized by the study team. The overall intent was to ensure that the study reflected community input.

Round 1: Existing Conditions

The first round of public engagement took place between March and October 2024. The strategies utilized were designed to create a flow of feedback and opinions from the West Oakland community to the study team. The first round of engagement also began to build trust amongst the legacy communities of West Oakland that are very skeptical of government intervention and large-scale projects, which have caused so much lasting damage to the area in the past.

The study team stressed that they would be approaching the visioning process without limitations with the goal of identifying the best-case scenario for I-980 for legacy West Oakland residents. To do this, the study team's role was to mostly listen, but also contribute expertise to encourage further discussion based on the possibilities that exist from precedent projects around the country and the world.

The activities and deliverables developed for round 1 included:

- Two mobile workshops
- Study website[11]
- Virtual public workshop
- Social media posts
- Online survey

Summary

Table 3 presents statistics from the activities that were conducted for the first phase of outreach.

Table 3. Public Engagement Round 1 Statistics

Measure	Statistic
Number of events held and attended	15
Number of event attendees	~750
Number of flyers handed out	~2,000
Number of surveys completed	2,715

Most of the people who had any prior knowledge of the freeway's history and the lasting harm that was done to the community by its construction were in favor of reimagining the corridor with specific benefits to the legacy communities that were harmed. There were comments that the freeway did not need to be removed in order to repair harm, however, alternatives were either not identified or not feasible (i.e., reallocate the money for the study and future phases as direct payments to impacted residents).

There was also mistrust and suspicion about whether the benefits from a reimagined freeway would truly benefit impacted communities. Additionally, some expressed concern changes to the freeway and surrounding community may worsen the dynamics of gentrification in West Oakland. In some instances, these fears and suspicions were allayed with the prospect of preventative policy and legislative initiatives like certificates of preferences.[12] Overall, respondents indicated that the reimagination of the I-980 freeway is a viable effort, but only if the work is tied to comprehensive harm repair.

There was also a predominance of input on the need for affordable housing, specifically to preserve the legacy communities of West Oakland. Additionally, the need for small businesses and other economic development strategies that could create jobs for residents was repeatedly mentioned.

Lastly, for the respondents who were aware of the cultural history of West Oakland before the freeway, an effort to restore and revitalize the arts should be factored into the reimagined corridor.

The feedback received was incorporated into the next portion of the study, which included the development of corridor scenarios. It was determined that the next round of public engagement should focus on more outreach to legacy residents of West Oakland and organizations to create strong partnerships across the study area to support the development of the corridor scenarios. There was significant interest from local legislators at the city, county, state, and federal levels to assist in the engagement efforts and help navigate the community and political landscape to support project priorities.

Round 2: Corridor Scenarios

The second round of public engagement took place between May and July 2025. The primary goal was to present the three corridor scenarios to the public and receive feedback on what the community liked, disliked, and/or wanted to change about each scenario. Building off the recommendations from the first round of public engagement, this round was designed to target and reach West Oakland residents and community members. The study team's primary role was to facilitate discussion from community members within West Oakland regarding the proposed scenarios through communication prompts and technical examples from precedent projects around the country and the world.

The locations and strategies were selected to connect with a range of residents both citywide and regionally, with a focus on legacy West Oakland residents. Activities were advertised through flyers, direct contact with individuals and organizations, e-mails, and social media posts. A distribution strategy was deployed where individuals, organizations, and other spheres of influence shared the information within their circles to expand communication reach. The activities and deliverables developed for round 2 included:

- Two mobile workshops (photos shown in Figure 8)
- Study website updates
- Public meeting/open house (photos shown in Figure 8)
- Social media posts
- Email updates to a project-specific mailing list
- Oakland Post ad
- Online survey

Figure 8. Mobile Workshops and Public Meeting/Open House Photos

11 Source: "Vision 980 Study", California Department of Transportation 2024, https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-projects/vision-980.

12 A certificate of preference applies to persons who were displaced by agency's property acquisitions and other actions implementing redevelopment plans.

Summary

Table 4 presents statistics from the activities that were conducted for the second round of outreach.

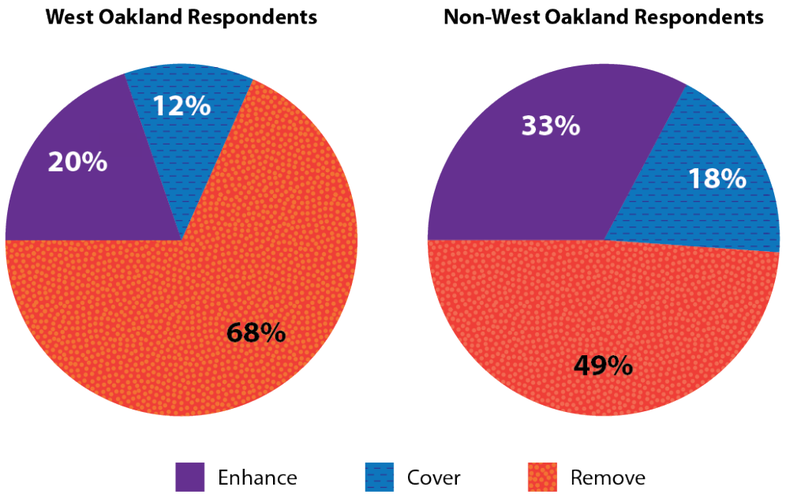
Table 4. Public Engagement Round 2 Statistics

Measure	Statistic
Number of events	8
Number of event attendees	~200
Number of fact sheets handed out	~450
Number of surveys completed	1,900

The results of the sticky note exercises from the mobile workshops and public meeting/open house and survey responses indicated a strong preference for the Remove scenario. While this was the prevailing sentiment, many event attendees had questions about how much the scenarios would cost and the estimated timeline for implementation. Study staff responded that those questions would be answered during Phase 2 of the study. Event attendees also indicated that they had heard about the study/survey prior to attending, which indicates that the reach of the study is beginning to grow.

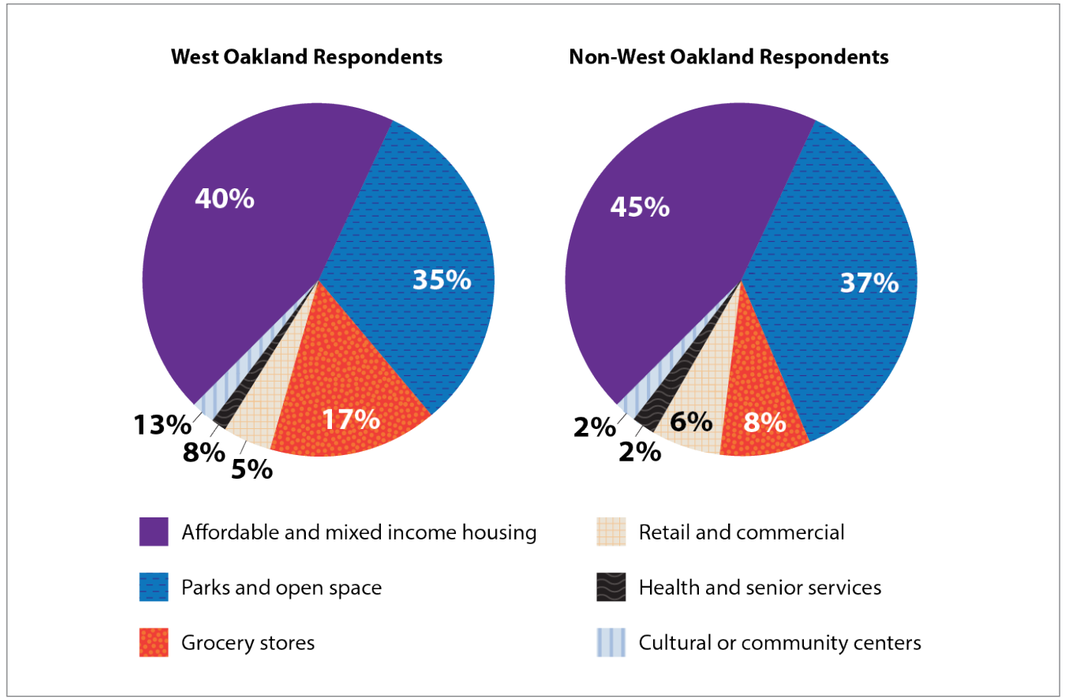
The survey results indicated a strong preference for the Remove scenario as well. As shown in Figure 9, this scenario was most frequently ranked as the most preferred scenario for both West Oakland non-West Oakland respondents, followed by Enhance and Cover.

Figure 9. Which Scenario was Most Preferred



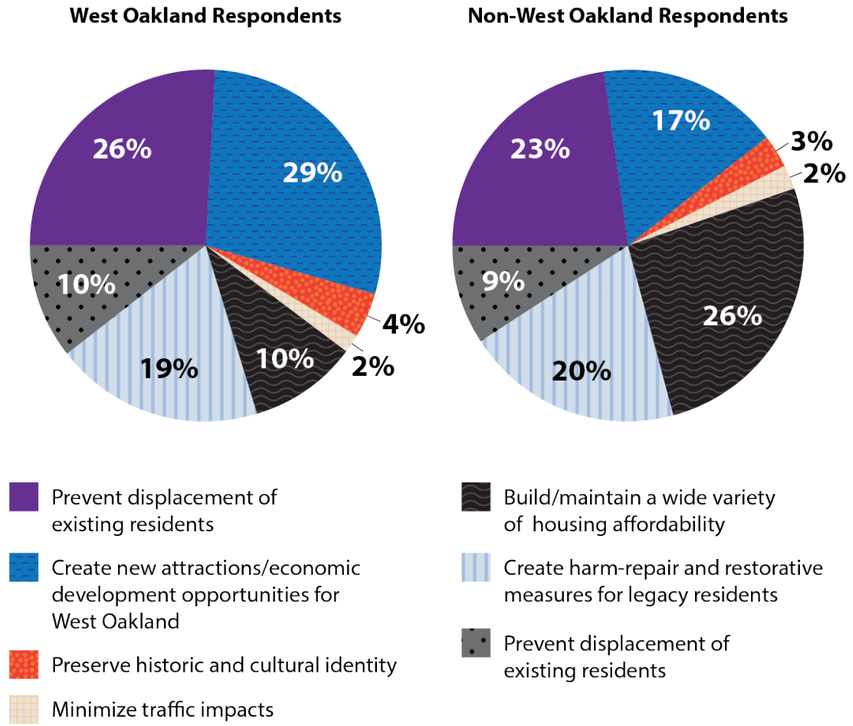
As shown in Figure 10, when asked about their opinions on how any new potential land opened by the Cover or Remove scenarios should be used, affordable and mixed income housing was most important to both West Oakland and non-West Oakland respondents, followed by parks and open space and grocery stores.

Figure 10. Top Ranked Land Use Options



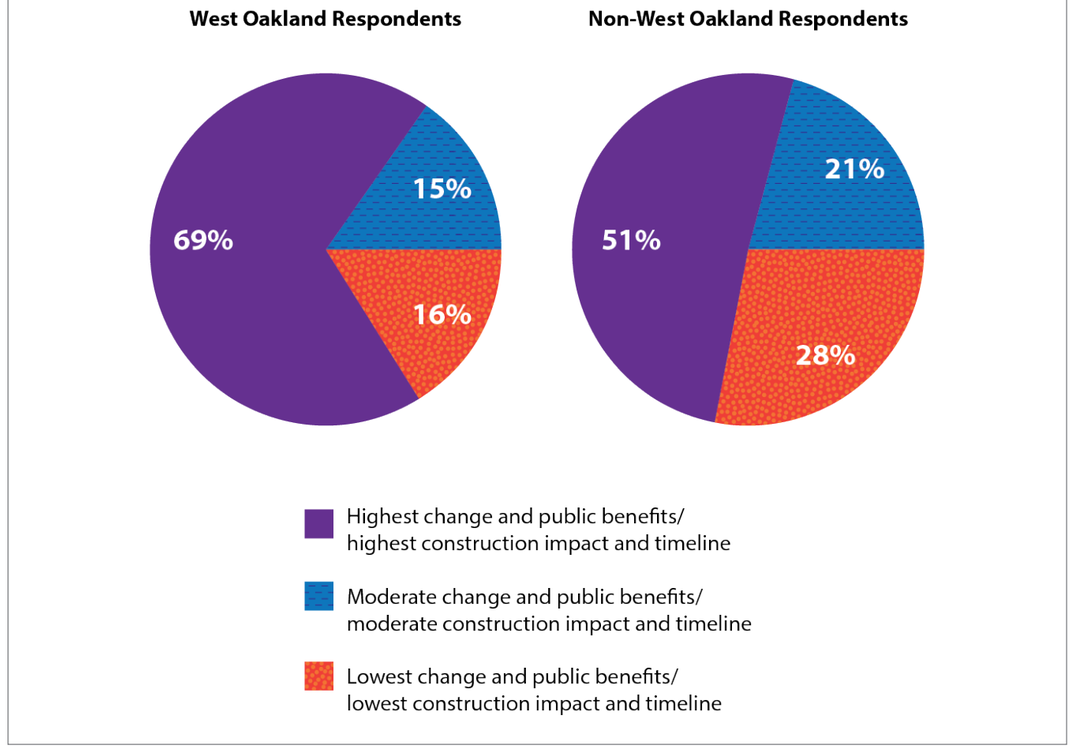
Survey respondents were also asked to prioritize potential impacts from any changes to the freeway from highest to lowest priority. As shown in Figure 11, most West Oakland survey respondents preferred to create new attractions/economic development opportunities for West Oakland followed by prevent displacement of existing residents and build/maintain a wide variety of housing affordability. Non-West Oakland respondents preferred most to minimize traffic impacts, followed by prevent displacement of existing residents and build/maintain a wide variety of housing affordability.

Figure 11. Top Ranked Issues



Lastly, survey respondents were asked to indicate how much cost, time, and construction impacts respondents would be willing to live with compared to the level of benefit to the community from most preferred to least preferred. As shown in Figure 12, all respondents were most comfortable with the highest cost/time/construction impacts to achieve the highest level of benefits.

Figure 12. Most Preferred Option

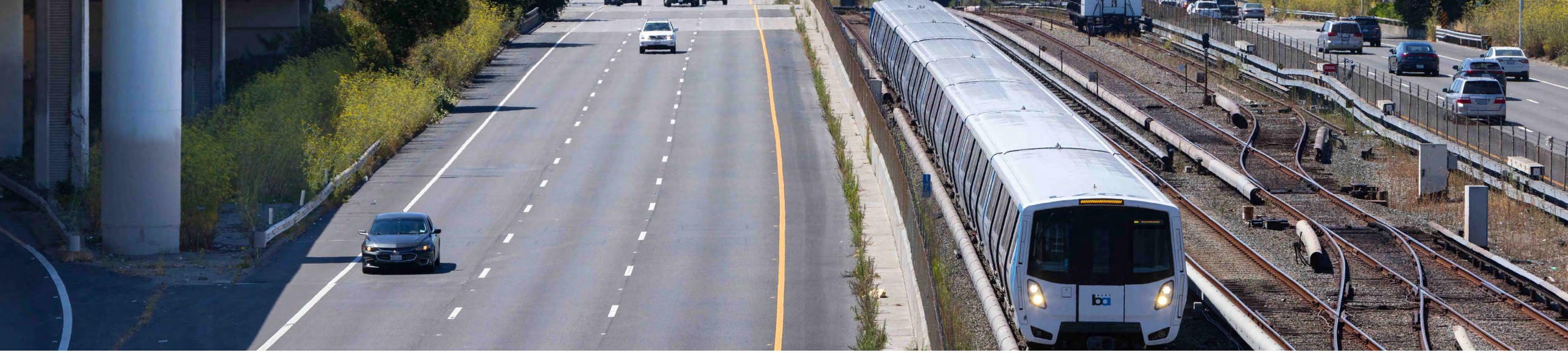


Round 3: Wrap-Up

To close out Phase 1 of the study, the study team updated the study website and developed social medai posts to thank the community for participating in Phase 1 and to stay involved for Phase 2. Caltrans will be offering presentations on the final report in early 2026.

5

Scenario Development



Scenario Development[13]

Building off the feedback from the first round of public engagement and TAC meeting #1, the study team developed a set of strategies to reconnect West Oakland that combined to form three corridor scenarios. The three corridor scenarios were organized by broad themes, each with a different approach to test a specific combination of strategies. The term "corridor scenario" was used to reinforce that these were very initial and preliminary concepts that will continue to be refined over the course of the study. The three corridor scenarios were titled Enhance, Cover, and Remove.

Given the large geographic size and varied characteristics of communities within the study area, two sectors were identified to create manageable planning areas. The identification of these sectors for planning purposes recognized that the strategies appropriate to reconnect the community across a depressed freeway are very different than the strategies appropriate for reconnecting under an elevated freeway. The two sectors included:

- West of San Pablo Avenue where I-980 is primarily a depressed freeway (below grade)
- East of San Pablo Avenue where I-980 is primarily an elevated freeway (above grade)

13 More information can be found in the technical memorandums for Task 2D. Evaluation Framework and Equity-Based Performance Measures, Task 3B. Equity Assessment, Task 6A. Develop Scenarios and 6B. Visualizations and Task 6C. Evaluation, and Task 7A. Identify Corridor Concept and Vision and 7B. Provide Future Recommendations.

Strategies to Reconnect

Each of the three corridor scenarios included a combination of the following strategies to reconnect neighborhoods across I-980 which could be mixed and matched based on a variety of issues such as available funding, project readiness, and community preferences:

- Planned bicycle and pedestrian investments from the City of Oakland
- Improve overpass/underpass conditions
- Cap/deck over travel lanes
- Removal of on/off ramps
- Narrow roadway
- Reconnect the street grid
- Demolish and remove the freeway
- New at-grade boulevard
- Reconfigure freeway interchanges

Corridor Scenarios

The following corridor scenarios were developed after initial community input and were shared and modified after receiving feedback from the Study Partners, CBOs, and the TAC. They were then shared with the public during the second round of public outreach. Each of the three corridor scenarios described below focus on a different approach and set of strategies to reconnect both sides of the freeway and repair past harms.

The corridor scenarios were organized from minimal to maximum intervention in the freeway infrastructure – with the maximum intervention being the full demolition and removal of I-980. Each of the corridor scenarios have impacts on traffic flows and capacity and the study's next phase will include a full analysis of traffic impacts to better understand, and avoid, increased traffic on local streets.

Enhance

As shown in Figure 13 and Figure 14, the intent of the Enhance corridor scenario was to achieve study benefits without significantly changing the existing freeway and local street infrastructure. This corridor scenario assumed that investments in the bicycle and pedestrian environment, including bike lanes and striping planned by the City of Oakland, are implemented. The existing overpasses/underpasses would remain but would be enhanced to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. No land would be freed up as a result of this scenario and the freeway conditions would remain as per the existing conditions. BART tracks are proposed to remain in their current location.

Figure 13. Enhance Corridor Scenario West of San Pablo Avenue

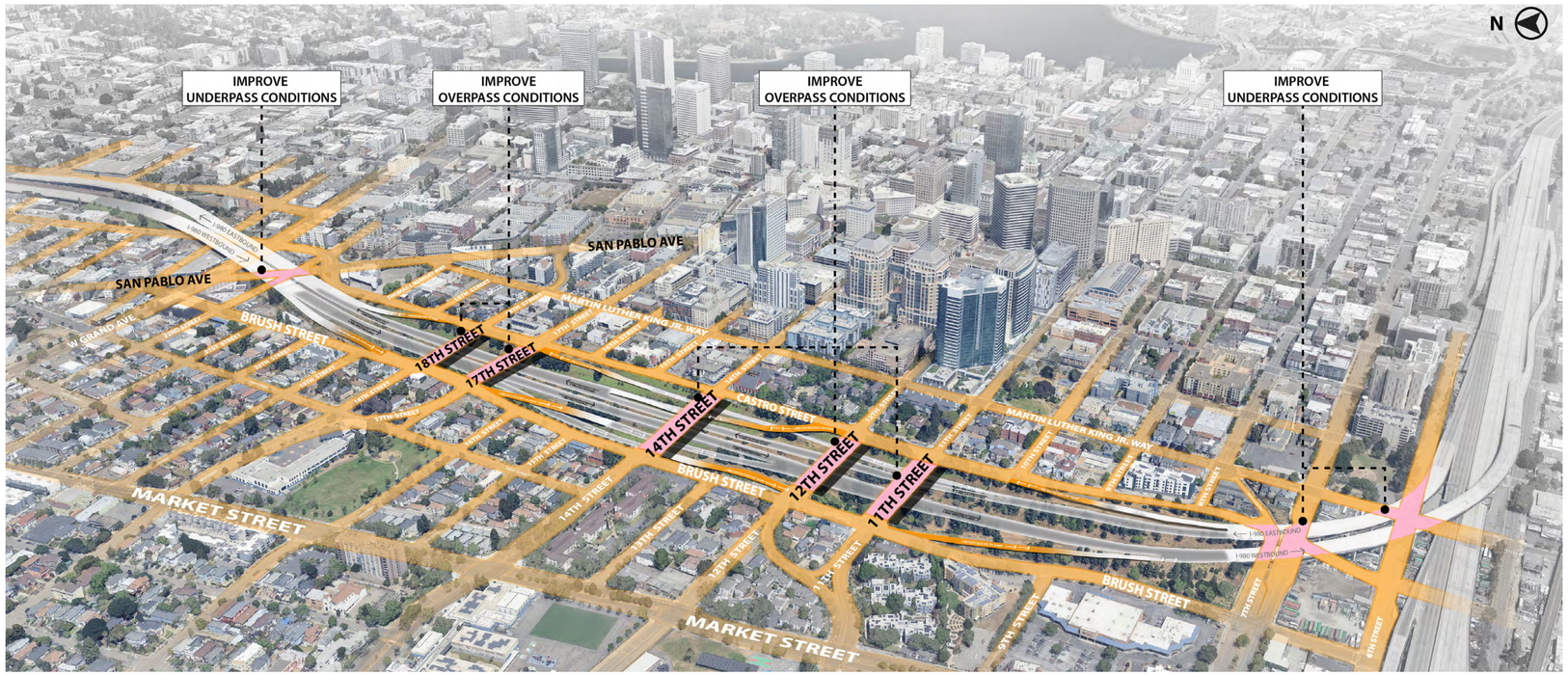
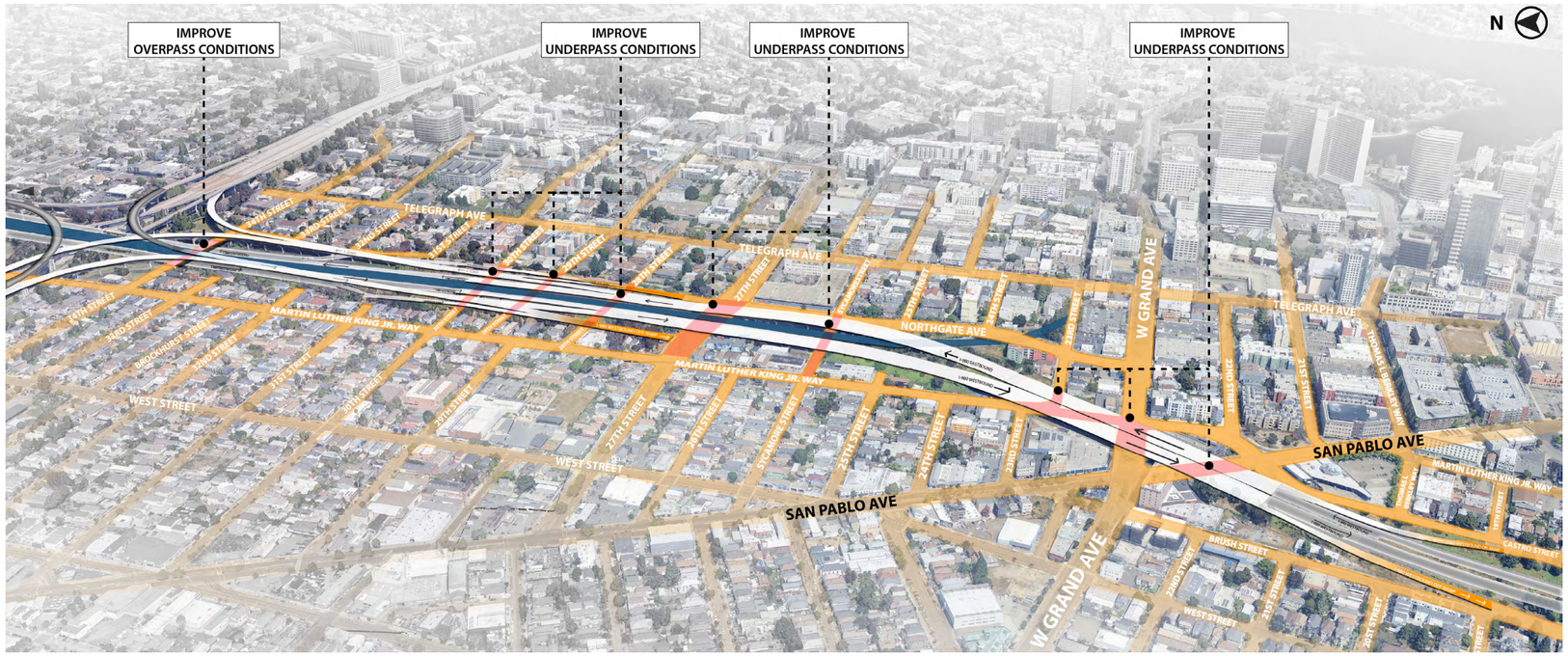


Figure 14. Enhance Corridor Scenario East of San Pablo Avenue

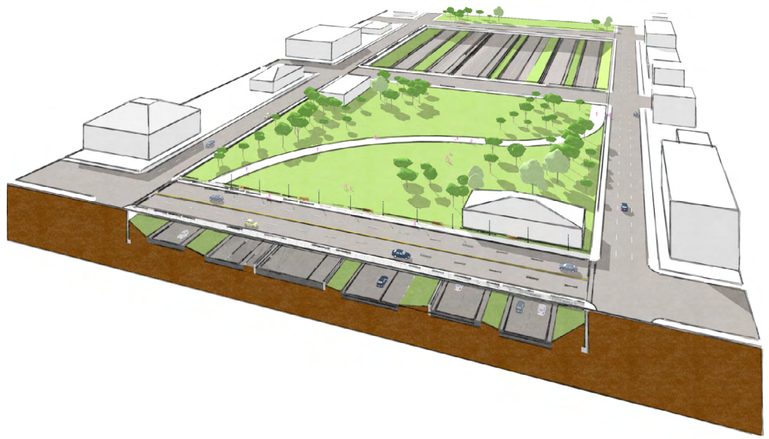


Cover

As shown in Figure 15, Figure 16, and Figure 17, the Cover corridor scenario proposed to cap and deck the travel lanes over the portions of the existing freeway west of San Pablo Avenue, in addition to implementing planned and additional improvements by the city and other agencies to the bicycle and pedestrian realm. Locations such as the blocks between 13th Street and 15th Street could be reconnected by way of a cap/deck. East of San Pablo Avenue, the existing freeway could be capped and decked between 34th Street and I-580. This cap/deck would connect Grove Shafter Park, which is now divided by I-980. Improvements were proposed to the existing overpasses and underpasses that remain to improve bicycle and pedestrian experience and safety. Two streets previously disconnected by the construction of I-980 would be reconnected, with additional crossings for pedestrians and cyclists planned where possible, mainly to the west of San Pablo Avenue.

The Cover corridor scenario would create opportunities for new community-serving land uses on up to 14 acres of caps and decks. Engineering costs would affect the scope and feasibility of mixed-use development on caps/decks over the freeway, and most likely the opportunities on the caps and decks would be focused on new open space with development on the decks limited to smaller one-story community serving buildings. The BART tracks are proposed to remain in their current location.

Figure 15. Cover Corridor Scenario – Typical Section West of San Pablo Avenue



The freeway travel lanes would be capped where feasible between 11th Street and 18th Street and east of 34th Street at Grove Shafter Park. The cap/deck would allow for open space or limited development over the travel lanes.

Figure 16. Cover Corridor Scenario West of San Pablo Avenue

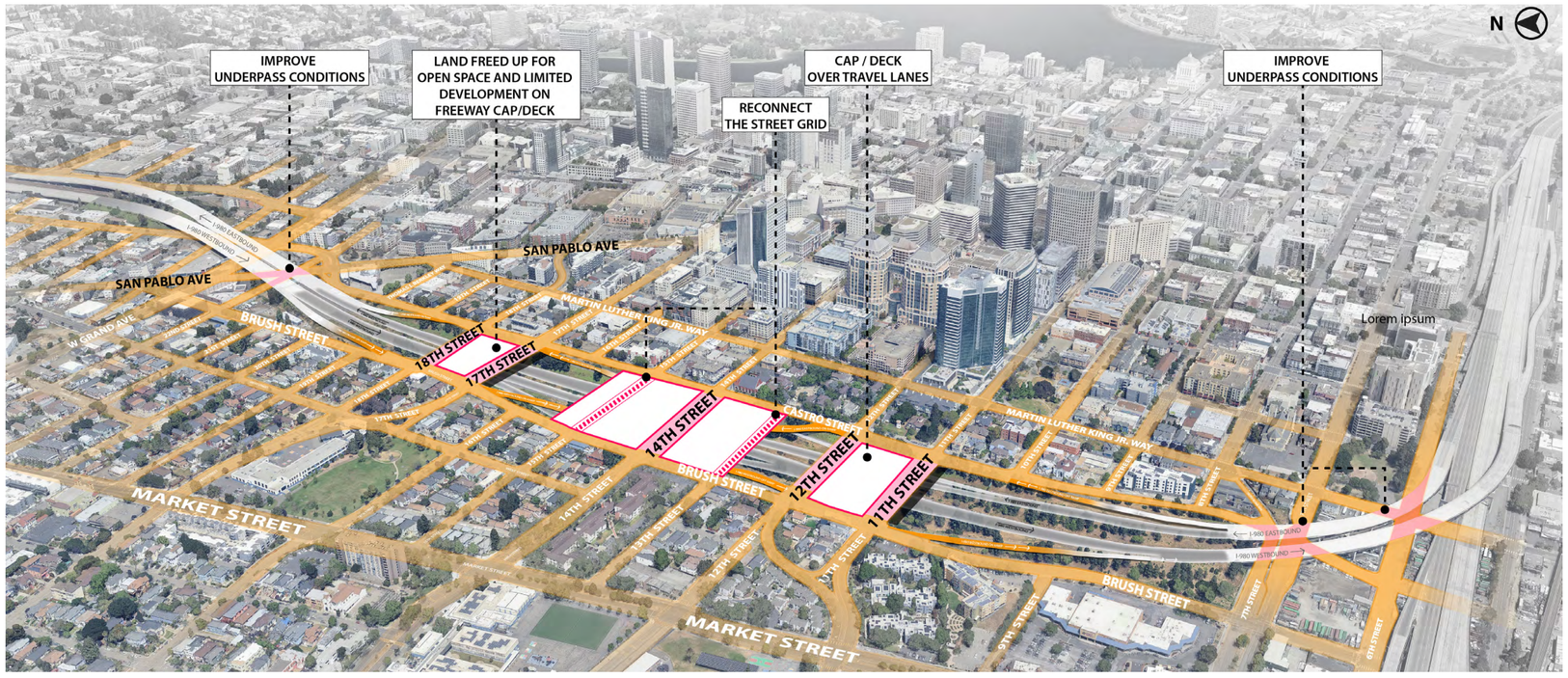
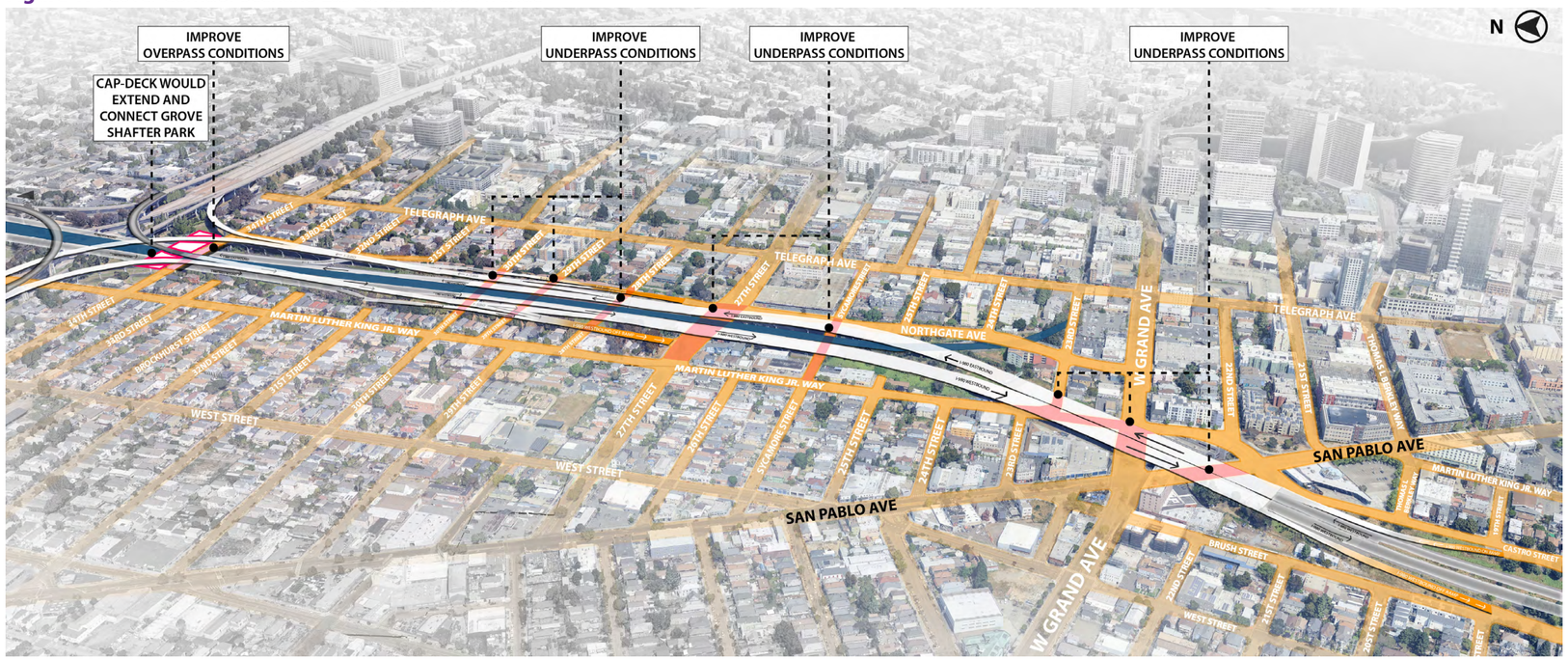


Figure 17. Cover Corridor Scenario East of San Pablo Avenue



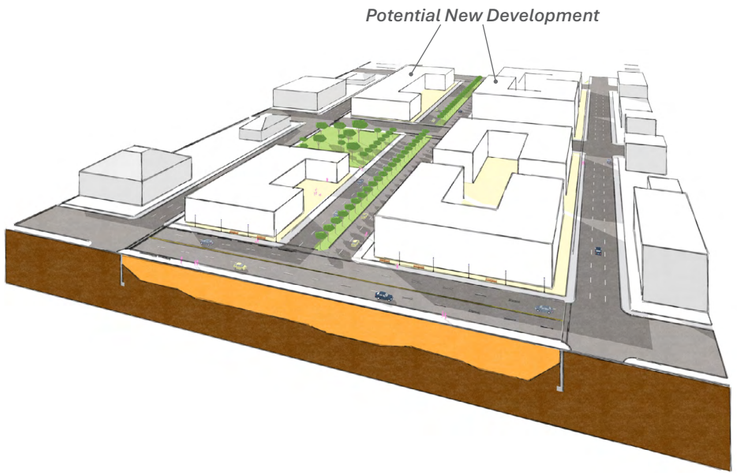
Remove

As shown in Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20, and Figure 21, the Remove corridor scenario included the full or partial removal of the freeway, including the east and westbound travel lanes and on/off ramps, between I-580 and I-880. The freeway depression would be infilled with soil and the elevated freeway structures demolished. The improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian realm planned by the city and other agencies would be implemented.

In this corridor scenario, a new east-west boulevard would be created. The boulevard could be located within the existing freeway right-of-way or could be a reconfiguration of Brush Street or Castro Street. East of San Pablo Avenue, the BART tracks are proposed to remain in their current location. The new boulevard would need to be located to either side of the BART tracks. Through truck traffic would be directed to other freeway routes. Local serving truck traffic would be directed to routes the city has already identified in the West Oakland Community Action Plan.

The historic street grid would be reintroduced where feasible. Land in the former freeway right-of-way, currently encumbered by the freeway travel lanes and the on/off ramps, would be freed up, opening up approximately 42 to 67 acres for development and/or open space based on community priorities. The I-880 and I-580 interchanges would be demolished and reconfigured.

Figure 18. Remove Corridor Scenario – Typical Section West of San Pablo Avenue



The full removal of the freeway with the filling in of the depressed sections of the freeway and demolition of the elevated sections would allow many of the historic crossings to be reconstructed. East of San Pablo Avenue the BART tracks would remain.

Figure 19. Remove Corridor Scenario West of San Pablo Avenue

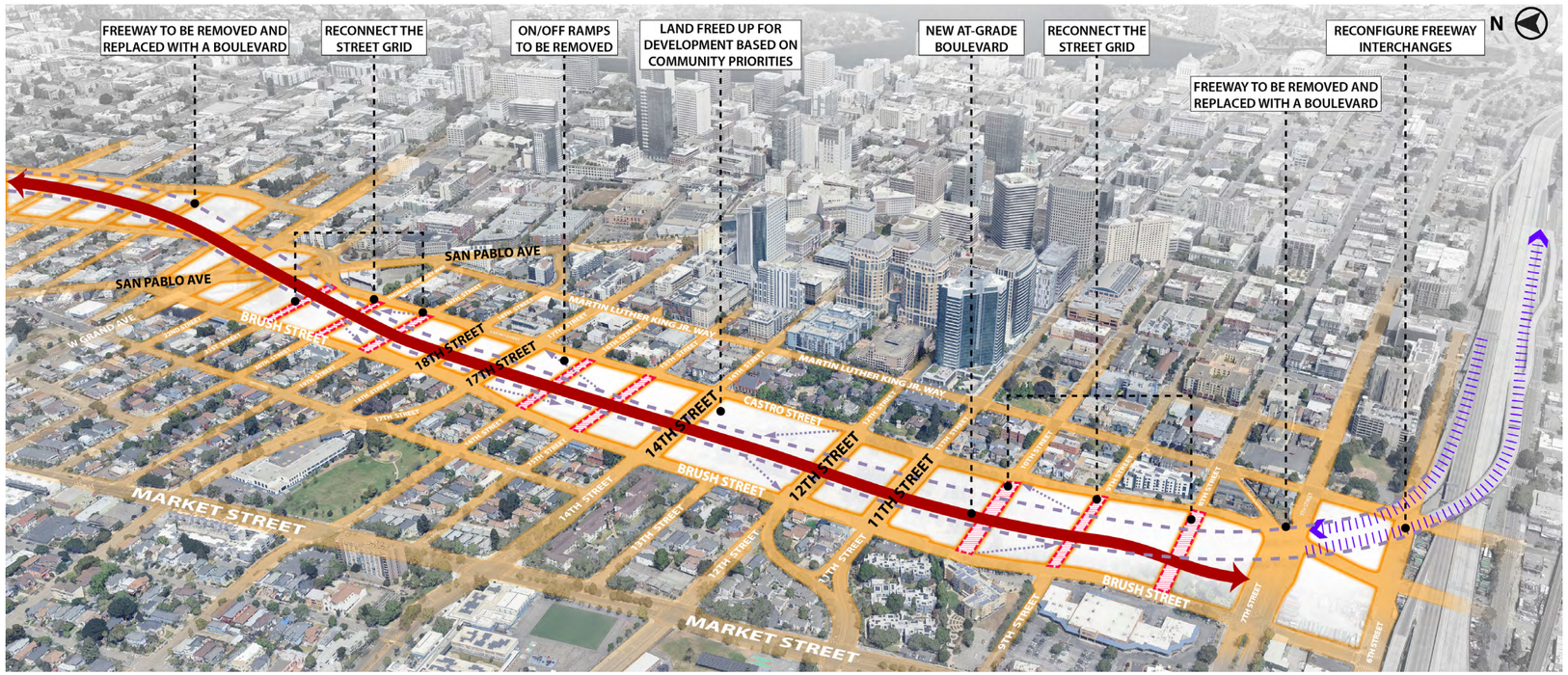


Figure 20. Remove Corridor Scenario East of San Pablo Avenue

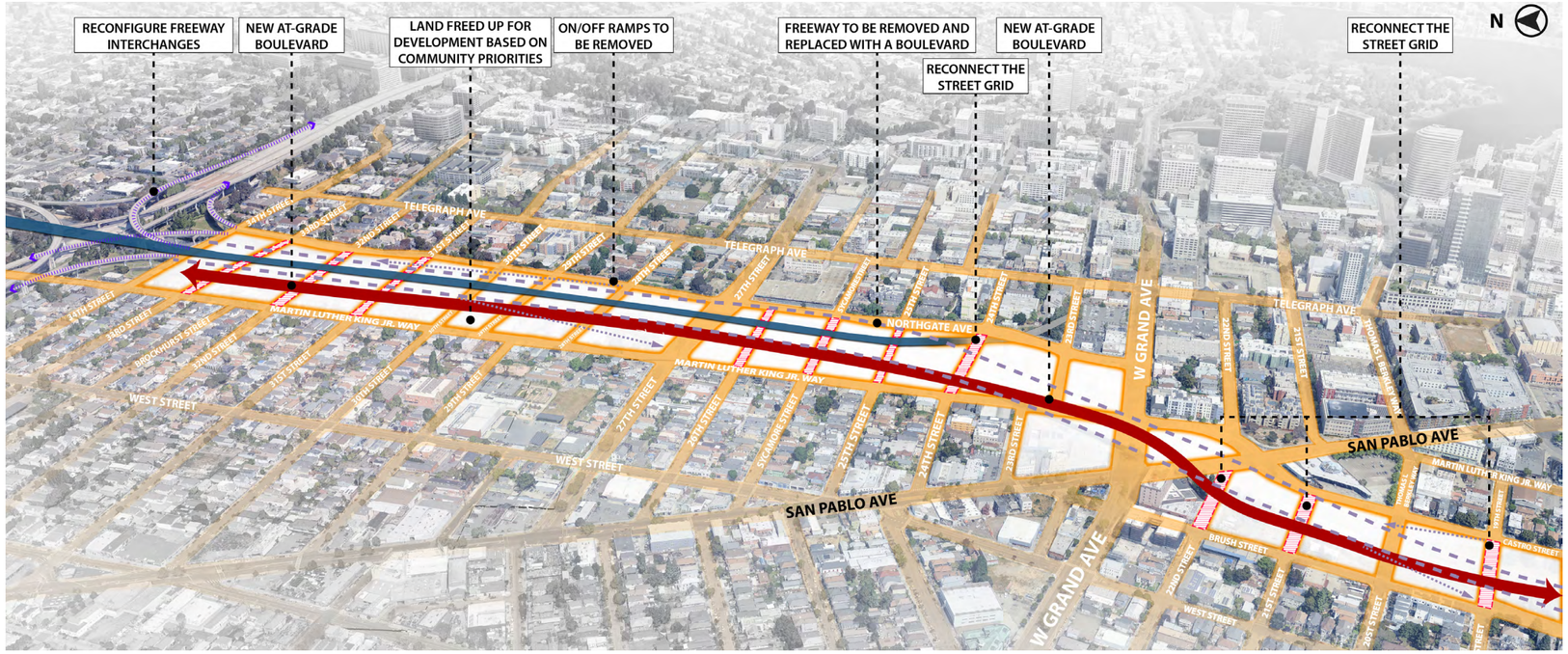


Figure 21. Example of Potential Development and Open Space with the Removal of the Freeway[14]

The full removal of the freeway with the filling in of the depressed sections of the freeway and demolition of the elevated sections would allow for the most flexibility in locating new development or parks in the former freeway right-of-way.

Summary of Corridor Scenarios and Strategies by Sector

Table 5 and Table 6 identifies the specific strategies associated with each corridor scenario. The intent was that this 'menu of options' would help stakeholders and the public to understand the full range of possibilities, and the tradeoffs associated with each. This provided a basis for decision-making and supported the identification of a recommended concept for the corridor. Table 7 summarizes how each corridor scenario met the equity-based performance measures.

Table 5. Strategies by Corridor Scenario West of San Pablo Avenue

Corridor Scenario	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Planned Investments	X	X	X
Improve Overpass/Underpass Conditions	X	X	
Cap/Deck Over Travel Lanes		X	
Removal of On/Off Ramps			X
Narrow Roadway			X
Reconnect the Street Grid		X	X
Demolish and Remove the Freeway			X
New At-Grade Boulevard			X
Reconfigure Freeway Interchanges			X

14 Source: "Innovation Mile Master Plan", City of Noblesville, 2023, https://www.innovationmile.com/uploads/1/4/7/0/147087185/innovation_mile_master_plan_1.pdf.

Table 6. Strategies by Corridor Scenario East of San Pablo Avenue

Corridor Scenario	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Planned Investments	X	X	X
Improve Overpass/Underpass Conditions	X	X	X
Cap/Deck Over Travel Lanes		X	
Removal of On/Off Ramps			X
Narrow Roadway			X
Reconnect the Street Grid			X
Demolish and Remove the Freeway			X
New At-Grade Boulevard			X
Reconfigure Freeway Interchanges			X

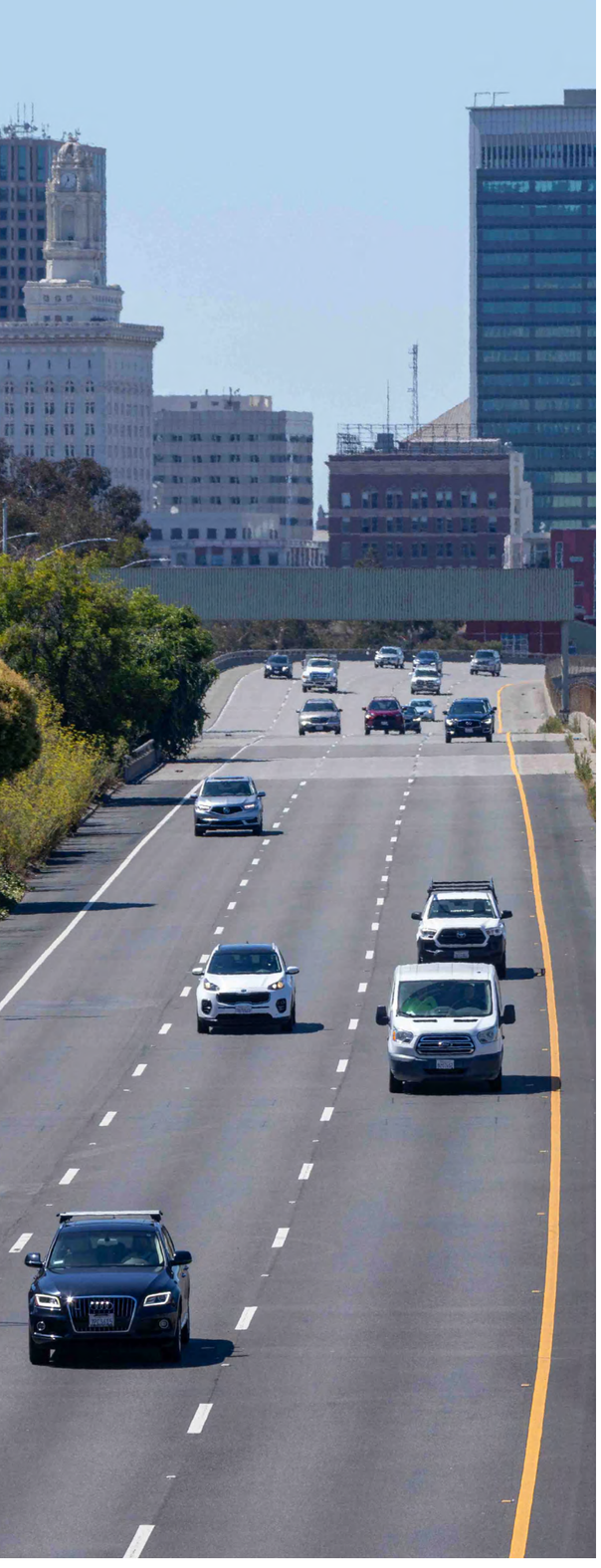
Table 7. Summary of Equity-Based Performance Measures by Corridor Scenario

Equity-Based Performance Measure	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Connectivity	• Enhances existing crossings • Does not create new crossings	• Several new crossings west of San Pablo Avenue • One new cap/deck crossing (pedestrian/bicycle) east of San Pablo Avenue • Enhances existing crossings	• Reconnection of the street network that existed before I-980 • More direct walking, biking, and driving connections rather than relying on the current set of overpasses and underpasses
Neighborhood Character	• The full freeway infrastructure remains in place • Limited neighborhood character improvement opportunities	• Potential for new public open spaces over the freeway • Potential for limited development based on community priorities • Does not change elevated freeway structure east of San Pablo Avenue	• Allows for new development • Potential for new public open spaces • Frees up the most land for community priorities
Community Benefits	Does not free up any additional land for new development. Benefits include: • Improved safety • Community character	Creates new open space options based on community priorities. Benefits of Enhance plus: • Cultural/community facilities • Open space/parks • Events/activation	Frees up the most land for new development based on community priorities. Benefits of Enhance and cover plus: • Housing • Commercial space • Jobs and economic opportunities
Land Use Opportunities[15]	0 acres	0 to 14 acres – for open space	42 to 67 acres – for mixed-use development
Cost, Time, and Construction Impacts	Low	Moderate	High

15 1 acre = 43,560 square feet.

6

Scenario Evaluation



Scenario Evaluation

Evaluation

This section evaluates the corridor scenarios against relevant study goals to identify the scenario(s) that should be advanced to the next level of analysis. Five goals were identified to guide the development of the study, however, not all study goals are able to be evaluated against the scenarios. The study goals relevant to this evaluation include:

1. Create community-informed transportation+ project concepts that address transportation, housing, economic development, parks, and culture to improve all aspects of quality of life in Oakland.
2. Foster a more sustainable West Oakland neighborhood by addressing corridor-induced environmental trauma like air quality, urban heat, and public health outcomes, and planning resilient new infrastructure.
3. Engage the community with humility to earn a meaningful and long-lasting relationship that empowers co-creation and collaboration from visioning through implementation.
4. Develop equity outcomes that directly benefit West Oakland residents, exceeding compliance with Title VI, the National Environmental Policy Act, and disadvantaged business enterprise regulations, or the status quo of reducing harm.
5. Identify public policies to achieve anti-displacement and anti-gentrification project concepts, and create project policies that bring project workforce opportunities to West Oakland residents.

The evaluation matrices below summarize how each scenario meets the objectives outlined in the Task 2B. Goals and Objectives memo. Some of these objectives (marked "TBE", or to be explored) will be addressed in future phases of the study. Key findings from the Task 3B. Equity Assessment are presented after the matrices.

Goal 1: Create community-informed transportation+ project concepts that address transportation, housing, economic development, parks, and culture to improve all aspects of quality of life in Oakland.

Table 8. Goal 1 Results

▲ Substantially Meets	● Generally Meets	■ Does Not Meet

Objective	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Collaborate with the West Oakland communities to define "reconnect" to inform concepts	▲	▲	▲
Develop multimodal transportation solutions and complete streets that improve options and road safety for the West Oakland community and connect to existing bus and rail services	■	●	▲
Align land use to the vision for housing, economic development, and parks developed in Phase 1, including types, scale, and location	●	●	▲
Identify and include alternatives to address basic infrastructure gaps with project concepts	■	●	▲
Identify community assets to preserve, improve connection to, or center in concepts	▲	▲	▲
Leverage infill and activation opportunities of vacant and underutilized land to improve or eliminate public safety and public health issues that occur in those spaces	●	●	▲

Goal 2: Foster a more sustainable West Oakland neighborhood by addressing corridor induced environmental trauma like air quality, urban heat, and public health outcomes, and planning resilient new infrastructure.

Table 9. Goal 2 Results

▲ Substantially Meets	● Generally Meets	■ Does Not Meet	TBE: to be explored in future phases of the study

Objective	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Explore the project alternative of complete removal of the freeway corridor along with traffic engineering options that do not route or divert traffic onto other West Oakland neighborhood streets	■	■	▲
Identify environmental risks and mitigations for deconstruction and new construction in project concepts, whether freeway corridor removal or other options	TBE	TBE	TBE
Include green infrastructure strategies to improve fresh oxygen sources, manage stormwater, create heat-absorbent streets and large surface areas, and more	TBE	TBE	TBE
Explore circular economy opportunities to repurpose materials that currently exist in West Oakland, whether they give new purpose to what would otherwise become non-biodegradable waste or preserve a piece of West Oakland history and culture	TBE	TBE	TBE

Goal 3: Engage the community with humility to earn a meaningful and long-lasting relationship that empowers co creation and collaboration from visioning through implementation.

In developing the scenarios, the study team engaged the community equally on all three scenarios to gather community aspirations as well as specific feedback. Therefore, evaluating how each scenario meets this goal is not a distinguishing factor in the evaluation of the scenarios. However, evaluating how each scenario responds to the input received from the community is a differentiator. Accordingly, the evaluation matrix for this goal consolidates specific feedback and comments gathered throughout the engagement process, organizing them into study metrics suitable for assessment. Table 10 evaluates key elements of the community's input, illustrating how each scenario addresses these expressed interests.

Note: The objectives in this table were surfaced during community engagement, so do not match the objectives listed in the original Task 2B. Goals and Objectives memo for this topic.

Table 10. Goal 3 Results

▲ Substantially Meets	● Generally Meets	■ Does Not Meet

Community-Sourced Objective	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure and strengthen public transit connections	●	●	▲
Enhance safety by implementing traffic calming measures, maintaining unobstructed sight lines, and upgrading lighting systems	●	●	▲
Create spaces for parks & increase greenery	■	●	▲
Provide additional land use options through new urban blocks to facilitate the development of housing, community facilities, and businesses according to community needs	■	●	▲
Eliminate the freeway and implement transformative initiatives to reconnect West Oakland	■	■	▲

Goal 4: Develop equity outcomes that directly benefit West Oakland residents, exceeding compliance with Title VI, the National Environmental Policy Act, and disadvantaged business enterprise regulations, or the status quo of reducing harm.

Table 11. Goal 4 Results

▲ Substantially Meets	● Generally Meets	■ Does Not Meet

Objective	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Acknowledge and address the trauma experienced by legacy Black West Oakland residents with harm repair strategies that make amends for the negative impact I-980 continues to have on them, and lead intra-agency and inter-agency dialogues on how to manifest the harm repair strategies	■	●	▲
Develop equity metrics to measure progress on achieving various equitable outcomes	▲	▲	▲
Identify different audience groups within the community to create benefits commensurate to their lived experiences	▲	▲	▲
Engage the community and TAC to inform equity metrics and equitable outcomes	▲	▲	▲
Foster ongoing learning from inspiring Reconnecting Communities projects with effective or innovative equity approaches nationally	▲	▲	▲

Goal 5: Identify public policies to achieve anti-displacement and anti-gentrification project concepts, and create project policies that bring project workforce opportunities to West Oakland residents.

Goal 5 was applied uniformly across all of the scenarios. The associated objectives are related to policy, procedure, or other non-spatial strategies that are not specific to a scenario (as shown in Table 12).

Table 12. Goal 5 Results

TBE: to be explored in future phases of the study

Objective	Enhance	Cover	Remove
Understand policy gaps that have allowed past and present displacement and gentrification and engage the appropriate public agency on ways to bridge the gaps	TBE	TBE	TBE
Identify policies that will align private sector partners to anti-displacement and anti-gentrification goals, including developers, micromobility companies, and similar	TBE	TBE	TBE
Develop a community agreement with a signatory pledge from the appropriate agencies committing to program policies to prioritize West Oakland residents for project workforce opportunities	TBE	TBE	TBE
Engage the community and TAC to inform equity metrics and equitable outcomes	TBE	TBE	TBE

Evaluation Findings

The Enhance scenario improves safety and connectivity, however it does not invest in the transformational changes needed to reconnect West Oakland to downtown nor does it create any new land for development based on community priority. There are no additional opportunities for affordable housing beyond what already exists. Therefore, the Enhance scenario generally does not meet the assessed goals.

The Cover scenario utilizes highway caps to generate new land for development informed by community priorities and introduces additional parks west of San Pablo Avenue, as well as expanded parks east of San Pablo Avenue. It involves notable investments in the reconnection of the street grid. While this approach offers significant advantages for the community, certain limitations around development remain; furthermore, the distribution of benefits is uneven along the corridor, with the majority of investments and positive impacts concentrated west of San Pablo Avenue. Therefore, the Cover scenario generally meets the assessed goals.

The Remove scenario eliminates the highway, restores the street grid, and offers the most opportunity for new development and parks/open spaces based on community priorities. This scenario permits the most flexibility in the future design of neighborhood investments to create a complete community. Therefore, the Remove scenario substantially meets the assessed goals.

Equity Assessment

The study team conducted an equity assessment of the three corridor scenarios to explicitly assess and design for racial equity in alignment with the City of Oakland's policies and programs according to their established Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA) process. The REIA process reflects "the City of Oakland's commitment to taking intentional steps to further racial equity [which] is essential to building and maintaining meaningful relationships with underserved communities." The goal is to "work with the community to create a city where everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to meet their essential needs, advance their wellbeing, and achieve their full potential." OakDOT defines its overall goal to implement equity in transportation projects as delivering equity focused infrastructure to Oaklanders. This includes measuring disparities in transportation outcomes for Oaklanders, engaging the community and stakeholders in developing projects, centering equity in the final project recommendations and implementation, and supporting small local businesses.

The equity assessment was focused on the Phase 1 activities of the study. It is important to acknowledge that Vision 980 is a multi-phase study. The assessment identified where and how equity concerns were being addressed through the study. There were equity goals that were not able to be addressed through the Phase 1 study. However, that does not mean those goals will not be addressed in future phases.

To facilitate achieving the study goals and repairing the harm of the I-980 freeway, the study identified audiences for the vision that made up the community affected historically and presently by the freeway. The community and the audiences the study served were defined through various stakeholder meetings with community leaders and regional agency representatives. Through these meetings, a collective definition of community was understood to include the following groups[16]:

- **Legacy Black Families in West Oakland:** these are Black residents who have lived in West Oakland since before I-980 was constructed and who have continued to live in West Oakland after the freeway's construction.
- **Legacy Residents in West Oakland:** these are residents who do not identify as Black that have lived in West Oakland since before I-980 was constructed and who have continued to live in West Oakland after the freeway's construction.
- **Displaced Black Residents in the Region:** these are Black residents who previously lived in West Oakland and were displaced by the freeway's construction. These residents were unable to return to West Oakland and have since lived elsewhere in the region but remain deeply connected to West Oakland through their family's history.
- **Displaced Residents in the Region:** these are residents who do not identify as Black that previously lived in West Oakland and were displaced by the freeway's construction. These residents were unable to return to West Oakland and have since lived elsewhere in the region but remain deeply connected to West Oakland through their family's history.
- **Non-legacy West Oakland Residents:** these are residents who moved to West Oakland after I-980's construction, and those who've moved within the last decade or less.
- **Non-West Oakland Regional Commuters:** these are regional residents and travelers whose primary connection to West Oakland is travelling through it to reach other destinations within the region.
- **Visitors to West Oakland/Downtown Oakland Destinations:** these are regional residents who visit West Oakland and downtown Oakland for recreation, shopping, dining, sporting events, and other activities.

16 The inclusion of small businesses will be considered for Phase 2.

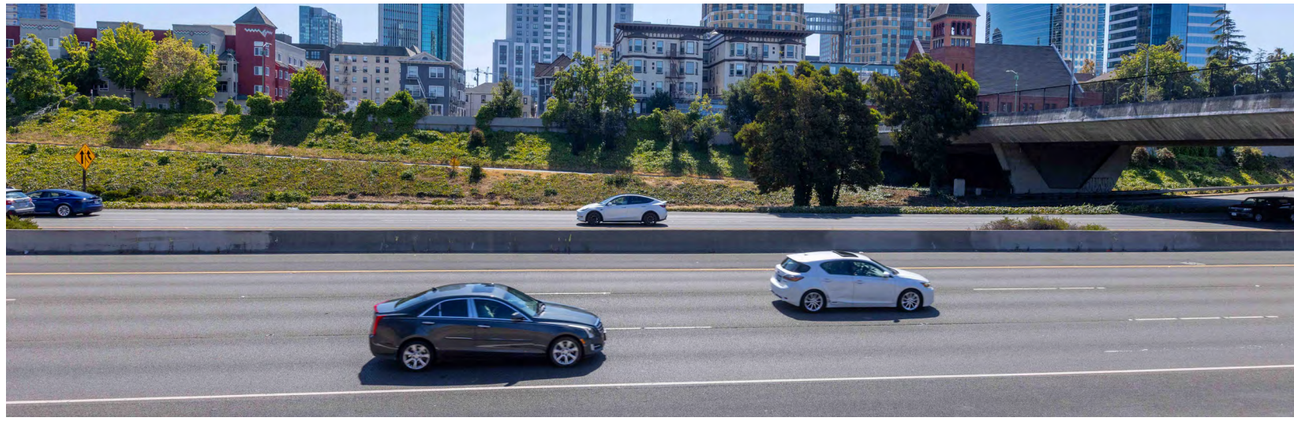
Equity-Based Performance Metrics Dashboard

To support an ongoing evaluation of the ways in which the study will equitably address community concerns and desires, a dashboard was created to support Caltrans and its partners in tracking the ways in which each phase of the study accomplishes equity goals to generate benefits to the audiences identified. The metrics included in the dashboard were developed with the TAC during a workshop that was held in September 2024. The dashboard integrated equity strategies into technical work streams across the study that led to equitable outcomes desired by stakeholders. The dashboard enabled Caltrans and the Study Partners to assess the success of actions across key disciplines.

The dashboard documented qualitative and quantitative outcomes associated with actions. The metrics were identified through the equity analyses, stakeholder engagement discussions conducted by the study team, and vetted by the TAC. The metrics were organized into the following categories that highlighted the ways the study could measure and deliver equitable outcomes for the community. The categories listed were connected to study goals developed with the community and provided the means to measure progress in achieving these goals. The categories are as follows:

- **Category 1:** Public Agency Accountability: metrics in this category relate to actions that public agencies are responsible for to achieve the study vision.
- **Category 2:** Community Relationship-Building: metrics in this category relate to actions across study stakeholders that foster relationships between the community and public agencies and build trust within the community.
- **Category 3:** Transportation Equity: metrics in this category relate to actions that improve transportation access, affordability, and connectivity in the study area.
- **Category 4:** Housing Equity: metrics in this category relate to actions that improve the availability of, affordability of, access to, and opportunities for housing.
- **Category 5:** Economic Development Equity: metrics in this category relate to actions that enhance access to jobs, workforce development, and availability of jobs that the community can access and from which they can benefit.
- **Category 6:** Parks, Public Art, and Culture: metrics in this category relate to actions that enhance the availability of parks, uplift local and historic culture through public spaces, and enhance quality of life for the community.
- **Category 7:** Harm Repair: metrics in this category relate to actions that directly address the harms and impacts of the freeway's siting, construction, and operations on West Oakland residents, particularly legacy and displaced Black Residents and other legacy displaced communities of color.

The dashboard was instrumental in facilitating



and monitoring both equitable processes and outcomes in developing a community-driven vision for I-980. It provided a quantifiable method to track the progress of meeting equity-related objectives through various stages of the study's lifecycle and is a tool for assessing how well the team was adhering to and achieving these equity goals. The dashboard should be utilized throughout the study life cycle (from visioning to implementation) by Caltrans and partner agencies to remain accountable to the visioning process. It should also be used by regional stakeholders and community members to track if, where, and how the study vision they helped co-create is being realized.

The study team evaluated the corridor scenarios using the metrics in the dashboard and documented whether and how the corridor scenarios satisfied the measure of success for each metric. If certain metrics were planned to be met in future phases, the reasoning was documented in the dashboard for the team to revisit and address at a more appropriate phase.

Each of the measures were scored using the following options:

- **Pass/Fail:** these are metrics that are either addressed or not addressed during Phase 1 of the study.
- **Counts:** these metrics are met whether a certain number of elements (i.e. number of affordable housing units, availability of park sites within a certain distance of the highway footprint).
- **Not Applicable or N/A:** this score is given to a metric if progress was made toward measuring the metric, or if the metric is not suitably able to be addressed during Phase 1 of the study.

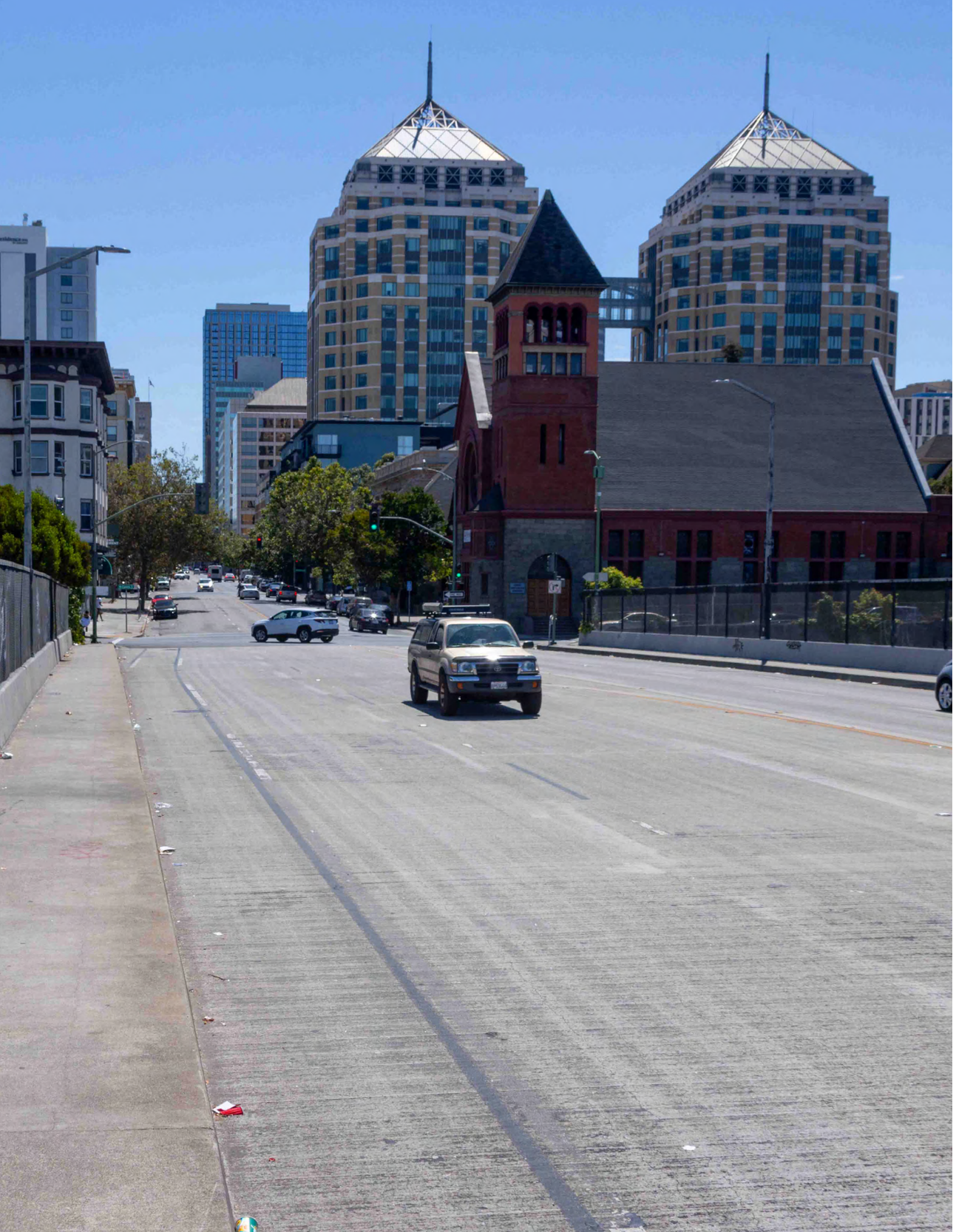
The results of the equity assessment can be found in Table 13.

Table 13. Equity Assessment Results

Scenario	Passes	Fails	N/A	Summary
Enhance	14	20	11	• Does not address community concerns nor reconnect the community • Does not sufficiently change or mitigate negative impacts of the freeway • Would slightly improve safety and connectivity of existing street network
Cover	20	14	11	• Creates opportunities for new development and helps reconnect the community • Addresses many of the equity gaps • Scale of development and impact is limited
Remove	22	12	11	• Fully reconnects the community • Helps reverse physical harm resulting from freeway's construction

7

Recommended Corridor Concept/ Vision and Next Steps



Recommended Corridor Concept/Vision and Next Steps

Summary of Remove Scenario

Scenario Evaluation

The evaluation of the three corridor scenarios (Enhance, Cover, and Remove) was designed to assess how each scenario supports the study's goals including:

- **Create** community-informed transportation+ project concepts that address transportation, housing, economic development, parks, and culture to improve all aspects of quality of life in Oakland.
- **Foster** a more sustainable West Oakland neighborhood by addressing corridor-induced environmental trauma like air quality, urban heat, and public health outcomes, and planning resilient new infrastructure.
- **Engage** the community with humility to earn a meaningful and long-lasting relationship that empowers co-creation and collaboration from visioning through implementation.
- **Develop** equity outcomes that directly benefit West Oakland residents, exceeding compliance with Title VI, the National Environmental Policy Act, and disadvantaged business enterprise regulations, or the status quo of reducing harm.
- **Identify** public policies to achieve anti-displacement and anti-gentrification project concepts, and create project policies that bring project workforce opportunities to West Oakland residents.

The evaluation process used a matrix-based approach to determine how well each scenario aligned with the study's goals and objectives. Scenarios were rated as either "Substantially Meets," "Generally Meets," or "Does not Meet" for each objective. The evaluation also incorporated findings from the study's equity assessment and community engagement activities to center the voices of study-area residents. This included analyzing the scenarios based on how well they met the equity-based performance metrics that were determined for the study. The scenarios were given a pass/fail determination based on how well the scenario addressed or didn't address the corresponding metric.

As shown in Figure 19 and Figure 20, the Remove scenario was found to have the greatest potential for repairing historical harm, restoring neighborhood character, and delivering equity-centered community benefits. Further, it supports the creation of complete neighborhoods, improves multimodal mobility and safety, and provides the most flexibility for future land use that is most aligned with the community's vision defined through this process. While this scenario involves the highest relative cost and longest implementation timeline, it also delivers the most comprehensive benefits with regards to connectivity and environmental justice while being the highest scoring alternative from community outreach.

The Remove scenario represents the most transformative approach to reimagining the I-980 corridor. This scenario encompasses the full removal of the freeway, including all eastbound and westbound travel lanes, on and off-ramps, and reconfiguring the interchanges between I-980 and I-580 and I-980 and I-880. In place of the existing freeway, a new at-grade boulevard would be constructed to accommodate local traffic with regional and through traffic redirected to adjacent freeways, like I-880. This new boulevard could be located within the existing freeway right-of-way or configured along Brush Street or Castro Street, depending on feasibility and future engineering design.

By removing I-980, this scenario frees up to 42-67 acres of land, creating significant opportunities to address community priorities such as affordable housing, parks, cultural amenities, and neighborhood-serving retail. The removal of the depressed freeway segments would allow the grade to be leveled with adjacent streets, while elevated segments could be demolished entirely. This would enable the reconnection of the historical street grid, with limited exceptions, restoring neighborhood connectivity between downtown Oakland and West Oakland.

The BART tracks east of San Pablo Avenue would remain in place, and the new boulevard would be designed to accommodate this infrastructure. Pending further analysis, through truck traffic would be directed to other freeway routes. Local-serving truck traffic would be directed to established truck routes the city has already identified in the West Oakland Community Action Plan, minimizing impacts on residential streets. Additional analyses will need to be conducted in Phase 2 of the study, including constructability, identifying suitable landfill material, engineering considerations, more detailed cost estimates, phasing opportunities such as ramp removal followed by mainline removal, traffic impacts, land use changes, etc.

Technical Advisory Committee Input

The third TAC meeting for the study was held in August 2025 and focused on a review of the three proposed corridor scenarios. The purpose of this TAC meeting was to gather feedback from agency partners and community stakeholders. TAC input highlighted the growing support for the Remove scenario, particularly for its potential to reconnect West Oakland to the rest of the city, improve safety, and free up land for community-centered development.

TAC members in this meeting emphasized the importance of ensuring that the land acquired through I-980 removal would be governed through a transparent and inclusive planning process; with their comments highlighting the need to consider environmental impacts, displacement risks, harm-repair strategies, community benefits agreements, and sustained stakeholder and community engagement.

Community Input

The second round of community engagement for the study was conducted between May and July 2025 and focused on presenting the three corridor scenarios. Engagement activities included mobile workshops, an open house, an online survey, and targeted outreach through neighborhood councils, schools, and cultural organizations. RBA Creative and EVOAK! Played a key role in connecting with legacy residents of West Oakland, conducting interviews, and distributing materials to amplify community voices.

Across all public engagement activities, the Remove scenario emerged as the most preferred option, especially among West Oakland respondents. 73% of West Oakland respondents and 52% of non-West Oakland respondents supported full freeway removal. 68% of West Oakland respondents and 49% of non-West Oakland respondents ranked full removal as their top choice among all three scenarios. Many saw it as an opportunity to repair historical harm, reconnect neighborhoods, and create new land for housing, parks, and community uses. Feedback in this round stressed the importance of using the newly available land for affordable and mixed-income housing, parks and open space, grocery stores, and community gardens. Respondents also highlighted the need to leverage the project for economic development, job creation, and setting up cooperative land ownership and community governance models.

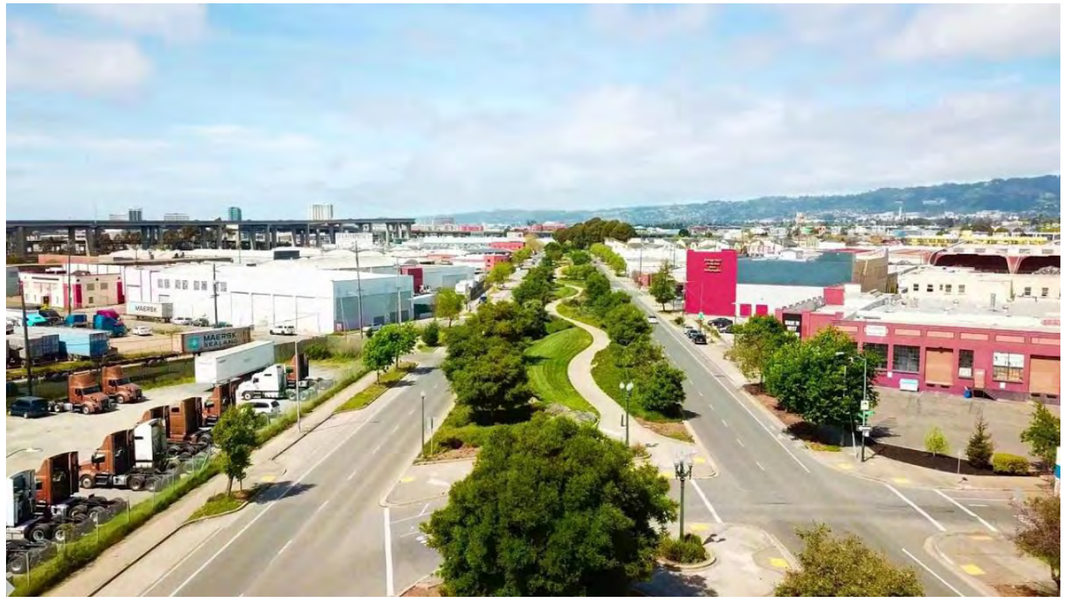
While concerns were raised about traffic impacts, construction disruption, and cost, most West Oakland respondents indicated they were willing to accept higher impacts in exchange for greater community benefits.

Freeway Transformation Case Studies

There are several precedents for successful interstate transformations, removals, or plans for removal across the United States that demonstrate the required processes and the need for organized community support.

Interstate 880 (Oakland, California)[17]

Figure 22. Mandela Parkway



The original Cypress Street Viaduct, part of I-880, was a double-decker freeway constructed in 1957 that ran through the heart of West Oakland, a historically Black neighborhood. Its construction displaced hundreds of families and physically divided the West Oakland community, contributing to decades of disinvestment and environmental burdens. In 1989, the Loma Prieta Earthquake caused the Cypress Viaduct to collapse which exposed the structural flaws of the elevated structure.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, West Oakland residents successfully organized and pressured Caltrans to reroute the freeway away from the neighborhood. Rather than rebuilding the viaduct in its original location, Caltrans realigned I-880 along a nearby industrial corridor and relinquished the former right-of-way to the City of Oakland. This resulted in the construction of Mandela Parkway, a landscaped boulevard with a wide green median, pedestrian paths, and public art, in the former freeway right-of-way. While Mandela Parkway was generally a success at the time, community members today criticize the lack of ongoing park maintenance and outsized space allocated to vehicles on the corridor; highlighting how community priorities have shifted over time.

Caltrans was the lead agency who was responsible for the freeway realignment and environmental review. Several community groups successfully organized and influenced Caltrans to reroute I-880 including the Citizens Emergency Relief Team, the Clean Air Alternative Coalition, Chester Street Block Association, Church of the Living God Faith Tabernacle, and West Oakland Commerce Association (who led the Mandela Parkway Corridor Plan in 1999).

17 Source: "Oakland | Mandela Parkway", Congress for the New Urbanism, 2025, https://www.cnu.org/oakland-mandela-parkway.

Key lessons learned from the I-880 corridor relocation include:

- Community organizing is essential to shift the narrative from technical feasibility to restorative justice.
- Land use planning needs to be community-informed with clear strategies for harm repair and anti-displacement.
- Environmental and health benefits can be key metrics to support the narrative for removal.
- Governance and land control need to be addressed early in the process.
- Community engagement must continue through implementation and operation to ensure reclaimed freeway space is well utilized and adapts with community needs.
- Long-term maintenance for new public spaces is an essential aspect of their success.

Interstate 490 Inner Loop East (Rochester, New York)[18]

Figure 23. New Housing and the Strong Museum Constructed on the Former I-490 Inner Loop East

The I-490 Inner Loop East was constructed in the 1950s as a sunken expressway that encircled downtown Rochester, physically separating downtown from the East End and contributing to decades of disinvestment. The freeway was underutilized, prompting calls from the city and neighborhood groups to reimagine the corridor. Led by the City of Rochester, with support from the New York State Department of Transportation and the Genessee Transportation Council, the city secured a federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant and construction began in 2014. The project partially replaced the expressway with a surface-level, multimodal boulevard designed to support safe multimodal access. The project is occurring in multiple phases, with work to remove the Inner Loop North, an elevated portion of the highway, currently taking place.

Community advocacy was a central component of the project's success, with groups like Hinge Neighbors organizing and advocating for the redevelopment. The project freed up nine acres of land, which has been used to construct over 500 units of housing and cultural attractions and has spurred $229 million in economic development.

Key lessons learned from the Inner Loop East removal include:

- Community trust needs to be earned. Generational harm has led to a deep mistrust in planning, requiring the need for transparency, flexibility, and continuous engagement with community members. Harm repair, community governance, and inclusive planning can help build trust and ensure benefits reach legacy residents.
- Implementation is complex and long-term; often requiring several years and coordination across local, state, and federal agencies and patience from the public. It took 25 years to fully realize the removal of the Inner Loop East.
- Project phasing can be useful to achieve neighborhood transformation.

18 Source: "Strong Museum of Play", TripAdvisor, 2025, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g48503-d240266-Reviews-The_Strong_National_Museum_of_Play-Rochester_Finger_Lakes_New_York.html.

Interstate 43 (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)[19]

Figure 24. New Development on Former Park East Freeway Right-of-Way (2000 Compared to 2025)

I-43, or the Park East Freeway, was originally constructed in the 1960s as part of a larger plan to encircle downtown Milwaukee with elevated freeways. The Park East spur was intended to link I-43 to the lakefront and I-794. However, only a short segment was built before public opposition halted further expansion. The partially built freeway divided neighborhoods and left behind underutilized land dominated by surface parking lots.

In 1999, the State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County, and the City of Milwaukee jointly approved the removal of the spur, with funding provided through a mix of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act funding and tax increment financing. By 2002, the elevated freeway was demolished and replaced with a six-lane at-grade boulevard, restoring the street grid and unlocking 24 acres of land for redevelopment.

Community groups played a vital role in shaping the outcomes of the removal. The Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods Coalition helped negotiate the Community Benefits Agreement to shape the redevelopment, including affordable housing.

Key lessons learned from the Park East Freeway removal include:

- Strong interagency collaboration is essential. The Park East Freeway removal required coordinated action between the State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County, and the City of Milwaukee.
- Project phasing can be useful to achieve neighborhood transformation.
- Funding can be pieced together from several sources. The Park East Freeway removal was funded through federal grants and local tax increment financing.
- Land-use planning needs to be proactive. Milwaukee adopted a form-based zoning code for the redevelopment area.
- Community benefits agreements can be a powerful tool to embed harm-repair strategies and protect legacy residents. The Milwaukee Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods Coalition successfully negotiated community benefits that ensured that redevelopment included living wages, local hiring, affordable housing, and sustainability requirements.

19 Source: Google Earth Aerial Imagery

Interstate 794 Spur (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)[20]

Figure 25. Concept Design for I-794 Spur Removal

I-794 was originally built to provide suburban access to downtown Milwaukee and has long been criticized for dividing the Historic Third Ward from the rest of the city. The push to remove I-794 is being led by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee County. The project is currently being studied with multiple alternatives under consideration including full removal, partial removal, and reconstruction. Subsequent phases of the study include preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), public engagement, and funding identification.

A key force behind the removal initiative is the community advocacy group Rethink 794, which has collaborated with urban planner and University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, professor Larry Witzling to advocate for removal.

20 Source: "Rethink 794 in MKE, Reconnect the Grid!", Rethink 794, 2025, https://www.rethink794.com/.

Moving Forward

The success of economic development and community restoration for urban interstate transformations across the United States provides a glimpse into the opportunities for West Oakland residents by the potential removal of I-980. If removal is shown to be feasible in Phase 2, there is a demonstrated path towards implementation, as explored in the various case studies above.

Subsequent phases of the study will analyze various alternatives, undertake additional community engagement, identify funding, and proceed through required project approval and environmental review and design phases. Near to mid-term enhancements of the I-980 freeway crossings can continue to be planned and implemented while the potential for a longer-term project is explored.

Phase 1 refers to this portion of the study that included collaboration with Study Partners, community organizations, and the public to identify a new corridor concept/vision for transportation and land use along the corridor. Phase 2 will include similar collaboration with Study Partners, community organizations, and the public to perform a more detailed feasibility and technical analysis of the Remove scenario.

Potential next steps for Phase 2 include:

- Complete Phase 2 feasibility study
- Detailed equity assessment of the Remove scenario
- Refine Remove scenario scope
- Support the development of a unified voice
- Research potential management structures to manage the project

Other next steps beyond Phase 2 that could be explored include:

- Develop Project Study Report-Project Development Support
- Develop FHWA project report
- Vision 980 Specific Plan with the City of Oakland
- Develop Project Approval and Environmental Document
- California Transportation Commission approvals
- Interstate access change request (FHWA)
- Funding
- Final design and construction (Plans, Specifications & Estimates)
- Land reuse

In summary, cities across the country have shown that removing urban freeways can spark a transformative change that reconnects neighborhoods, repairs historical harm, and unlocks new opportunities for equitable development. The success of projects like Mandela Parkway, the Inner Loop East, and Park East demonstrate that when communities lead, bold visions can become a reality.

The Phase 2 feasibility analysis will provide more details on topics that are important to community members including traffic patterns, safety, land use, displacement, cost, funding, and other elements.

Studying the removal concept for I-980, including phased improvements, offers more than a transportation project proposal: It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore what was lost, to reclaim land for housing, parks, and cultural spaces, and to build a future shaped by those that have been most impacted. With up to 67 acres of new land, the removal of I-980 can reconnect West Oakland with downtown, heal the physical and social divide, and allow investment in a community-led vision for justice and renewal.

VISION980

Reconnecting Communities

OAKLAND

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