March 8, 2012

Sailaja Kurella, Regional Planner
Association of Bay Area Governments
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

SUBJECT: PDA Application – Downtown Danville

Dear Ms. Kurella

In the email you sent in early February you posed several questions. Your generalized questions are repeated below and along with our corresponding responses. Under separate cover we will pass on comments/questions about the determination by ABAG/MTC that the proposed Downtown Danville PDA application has been found to have an inadequate level of transit service to meet the criteria for a PDA (i.e., transit does not meet the target 20 minute headway during peak weekday commute periods). You will note that some of the comments included in this letter address the minimum headway issue.

Question Topic Area #1

The Town's PDA application notes that future residential densities in the area will include Residential - Multifamily - High/Medium Density (20-25 du/ac) and Residential - Multifamily - High Density (25-35 du/ac) zones (listed under Part 1i of the PDA application). However, the General Plan zoning map shows only Residential - Multifamily - Low Density (7-12 du/ac) and Residential - Multifamily - Medium Density (13-21 du/ac). Could you confirm whether the apparent discrepancy is a result of the fact that the General Plan map is from the 2010 General Plan and that the proposed 2030 General Plan will have the new designations listed in the PDA application? Could you provide a zoning map of the draft 2030 General Plan?

Response

The Land Use Map for the Danville 2010 General Plan (i.e., Figure 5 of the 2010 Plan) contained mapping errors as it did not reflect land use designation changes formalized with the August 1999 adoption of the 2010 Plan. Specifically, with the 1999 action, the Town split the previously existing Residential - Multiple Family - Medium Density (13-21 du/ac) land use designation into two designations, being a Residential - Multiple Family - Low/Medium Density (13-17 du/ac) designation and a Residential - Multiple Family - High/Medium Density (18-22 du/ac) designation. The changes were reflected within the body of the document (see Pages 44, 49 & 50 of the 2010 Plan).

Through the process of securing State of California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) approval of the Danville 2007-2014 Housing Element, the Town secured authorization to have the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) shortfall identified in the Housing Element handled through the creation and application of a recalibrated Residential - Multiple Family - High/Medium Density (18-22 du/ac) designation and the creation of a new land use category covering a 25-35 units per acre density. The recalibrated land use designation [retitled to "Residential - Multifamily - High/Medium Density (20-25 du/ac)"] and the new land use designation [preliminarily identified as "Residential - Multifamily - High Density (25-35 du/ac)"] have been incorporated into the Draft Danville 2030 General Plan. The Draft 2030 Plan (along with the associated General Plan EIR) is slated to be released for public review in about two months.

Enclosed please find a table that expands upon the multifamily sites table previously forwarded to you as part of the Town's PDA application. This table lists all multifamily sites within the Town (including proposed multifamily sites under review through General Plan update) and details both the current land use designations (under the 2010 Plan) and proposed land use designations (under consideration in the Draft 2030 Plan). Note that to recalibrate the Residential - Multiple Family - High/Medium Density (18-22 du/ac) designation contained in the 2010 Plan, it will be necessary to recalibrate the density ranges for all the remaining multifamily land use designations that were included in the 2010 Plan. A corresponding land use map has not been prepared to date. We will forward a copy of the draft land use map for the 2030 Plan once it has been prepared.

Note that the mandate for the RHNA shortfall acknowledged in the Danville 2007-2014 Housing Element is to identify and designate at least two additional acres to a minimum 20 units per acre land use designation (to be handled by the Residential - Multifamily - High/Medium Density (20-25 du/ac) designation) and to identify and designate a minimum of eight acres to a 25 units per acre land use designation (to be handled by the Residential - Multifamily - High Density (25-35 du/ac) designation). The Draft 2030 Plan and the associated EIR have been structured to allow the Town to consider the merits of changing roughly 2½ times the minimum acreage called for under the RHNA shortfall analysis. Many of those sites would be situated within the PDA area – with the change in land use designation at least peripherally linked to whether the PDA is approved by ABAG/MTC.

Question Topic Area #2

Is the transit service that is available to the BART stations during AM/PM commute times heavily utilized? Has there been any discussion during your planning processes for the area about increasing transit service, particularly during AM & PM peak commute times? As you note, the current bus service in the area do not quite meet our transit service requirements, but if the buses are heavily utilized by commuters or if service improvements have been recommended in the General Plan, we can make a strong case that this is a transit-oriented community.

Response

The Town has not had an opportunity to check with The County Connection as to ridership since your inquiry nor have we had an opportunity to field check ridership.

It needs to be noted that a total of three different County Connection bus routes pass through the Danville Park and Ride site, which is located within the Downtown Danville PDA. This fact provides the desired transit connectivity as it allows transit riders multiple options to access BART-Walnut Creek, BART-Dublin and the Pleasanton ACE Train station – and the Downtown Danville PDA. A fourth County Connection route serves the PDA but does not stop at the Park and Ride (i.e., Route 321).

The bus routes with a scheduled stop at the Park and Ride site include Route 21 BART-Walnut Creek/San Ramon Transit Center; Route 92X Mitchell Drive Park and Ride to Ace Train Station; and Route 95X BART-Walnut Creek to San Ramon Transit Center. In combination, these routes provide an average headway for weekday peak AM/PM transit periods of 15 to 16 minutes (see enclosed table).

The combination of weekday routes for County Connection Routes 21 and 321 get the Danville Blvd./Hartz Ave./San Ramon Valley Blvd. corridor through the Downtown Danville PDA very close to the 20-minute headway target by and of themselves. As shown on the enclosed map, the Downtown Danville PDA contains nine northbound and nine southbound County Connection bus stops. Routes 21 and 321 make stops at all these bus stop locations.

The enclosed tables provide a representative look at the headways for the weekday peak AM/PM transit periods along the Danville Blvd./Hartz Ave./San Ramon Valley Blvd. corridor that transects the PDA. Per the information provided in the table, the corridor is served with a 22 minute average headway during weekday peak AM/PM transit periods just by Routes 21 and 321. This weekday peak AM/PM transit period headway calculation is likely different than the previously estimated headways as it accounts for a supplementary bus route (i.e., Route 321) not accounted for in the PDA application packet (or in the Draft Danville 2030 General Plan).

As discussed in the PDA application packet, the Danville Park and Ride - at 246 spaces and occupying over six-plus acres - represents a significant resource to the transit network. As indicated in the PDA application material, the presence of private-sector bus-pooling operating weekdays out of the Park and Ride supplements the County Connection bus service described above.

Supplementing bus service to the PDA is the presence of the Iron Horse Trail – which serves as the commute choice for numerous Danville residents and Danville employees. It can be reasonably argued that the presence of this transit facility equates to the transit value of one or two additional County Connection buses per each commute period. Specifically, since the

Iron Horse Trail reasonably sees use by some 20-40 daily commuters coming onto, or exiting off of, the trail facility for work-related trips – this facility has the equivalent value of another one or two County Connection buses traveling through the PDA.

The Draft Danville 2030 General Plan includes language underscoring the value of the Iron Horse Trail as a part of the overall transit network. The following is an excerpt from the Mobility Chapter of the Draft 2030 Plan:

> "Bicycling is a healthy, environmentally sustainable mode of travel. While cycling has traditionally been regarded as a form of recreation in Danville, it can also be a viable means of traveling to school, shopping, work, and other destinations. Facilities such as the Iron Horse Trail are particularly important, as they connect Danville to two BART stations, major employment centers, and the surrounding region. The Iron Horse Trail also connects residential neighborhoods to one another, to Downtown, and to local schools and parks, and to cities along the I-680 corridor from Dublin to Concord."

The Mobility Chapter of the Draft 2030 Plan also includes the following discussion about the Iron Horse Trail:

> "The Iron Horse Trail Corridor, formerly the Southern Pacific Railroad, runs from Concord south through Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, Danville, San Ramon, Dublin, and Pleasanton. The Contra Costa County portion of the Trail is 18.5 miles long and varies in width from 30 to 100 feet. The right-of-way is occupied by various underground utilities and a 10-foot wide, paved multi-use trail that is managed by the East Bay Regional Park District. There are plans to extend the Trail north to Suisun Bay and east to Livermore, bringing the Trail's total length to a distance of 40 miles.
>
> The Iron Horse Trail is particularly important as an access route to Downtown Danville and makes cycling a viable alternative to driving Downtown for many residents. The Trail also attracts recreational bicyclists from across the region, helping to support Downtown businesses. A signalized mid-block crossing was installed in Downtown Danville in conjunction with development of the Iron Horse Plaza Shopping Center, providing safe at-grade access across San Ramon Valley Boulevard. At several other street trail crossings in Danville, the trail is equipped with lighted in-ground crosswalk sensors or flashing beacons. The trail continues to cross several major Danville thoroughfares at-grade, including Sycamore Valley Road and Crow Canyon Road, just east of I-680."

As regards general discussion of public transit service in Danville (and consideration of supporting enhanced transit service specifically), the Mobility Section of the Draft 2030 Plan includes the following language:

> "Public Transit Service in Danville

Local bus service is provided to Danville by Central Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCCTA), or "County Connection." Service has been significantly reduced since 1999 in response to reduced State funding. The County Connection operates three types of bus service in Danville.

The primary service is a weekday route (Route 21) that connects the Walnut Creek BART station with the San Ramon Intermodal Transit Center in Bishop Ranch Business Park in half hour intervals from 7:20 A.M. to 11:20 P.M. The bus travels along Danville Boulevard, Hartz Avenue, and San Ramon Valley Boulevard, with a stop at the Danville Park and Ride lot on Sycamore Valley Road.

Second, CCTA provides two express bus routes. The first (Route 95X) provides service between the Walnut Creek BART station and the San Ramon Intermodal Transit Facility. This service runs only on weekdays, from approximately 6:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. and from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. The second (Route 92X) provides service from Walnut Creek to the Altamont Commuter Express (A.C.E.) train station in Pleasanton. Both bus routes stop at the Danville Park and Ride several times a day.

The third type of service is a "school tripper" (Route 623) that runs on a limited service basis, providing service primarily to school children. It begins at Alamo Plaza on Danville Boulevard and winds its way eastward and southward to the City of San Ramon.

Public transit in Danville is supplemented by TRAFFIX, a local student transportation program. The goal of TRAFFIX is to reduce peak period congestion near school campuses. The program offers subsidized transportation for children in the most congested areas of the San Ramon Valley (see the Implementation section of this chapter for more information).

Several privately sponsored vanpools operate from areas in and around Danville, providing guaranteed seating and direct service on a monthly fee basis. Patrons are picked up at the Sycamore Valley/ I-680 park and ride lot (discussed below) or at other points near the I-680 freeway ramps and are taken to major work locations throughout the Bay Area in San Francisco and other cities. There may be opportunities to supplement these types of services in the future as the mobility needs of Danville residents and workers change and travel patterns evolve."

Discussion continues later in the Mobility Chapter of the Draft 2030 Plan as follows:

"Transit Service in Danville/Transportation System Management

Danville will continue to pursue transit service improvements, with a focus on three primary user groups:

- Commuters, including residents commuting out of Danville to work and those commuting into Downtown Danville for work
- Persons without access to a motor vehicle, including students and lower income households
- Those with special transportation needs such as the elderly and disabled."

Because funding for transit is very limited, it is important that solutions are practical and respond to the land uses and demographics of the community. County Connection service has decreased in recent years while the rate of auto ownership in Danville has increased. Reversing these trends will require creative approaches that redefine what we conventionally think of as "public transportation"."

New types of service should be explored to supplement the traditional fixed route services along Danville Boulevard/ Railroad/ San Ramon Valley Boulevard and I-680. These could include demand-responsive dial-a-ride services, car-sharing programs, and potentially a circulator bus that loops from the Sycamore Valley Park-and-Ride through Downtown Danville."

Demographic projections suggest that a majority of Danville residents will commute to jobs in other cities in the future. Thus, increases in express bus service from Danville to the BART stations and nearby employment centers will be needed. As these services increase, the adequacy of the Sycamore Valley Park and Ride lot will need to be evaluated. The lot already is used as an informal pick up spot for corporate vans and shuttles, and could see higher demand and use in the future."

The Park and Ride lot is also the point of arrival for persons taking express buses from the BART stations into Danville, either to go to work (in Downtown Danville) or to shop and patronize local businesses. Pedestrian connections from the Park and Ride to Downtown should be improved. As noted above, a circulator bus or van could provide a connection from the lot into Old Town Danville and other nearby destinations."

Land use decisions will become a more important part of public transit strategies in the future. By focusing new development near the Town's major north-south transit corridor, ridership levels may increase and transit may become more viable. Likewise, transit can become a more attractive option if bus waiting areas are well designed and located, and the buses themselves are comfortable and reliable. Bus service can also be improved if the number of transfers to reach destinations is reduced, and if service is coordinated with other modes of travel, such as BART."

The availability of funding continues to be the most challenging issue facing transit operations. The Town of Danville will continue to advocate for the maintenance of existing transit services and stable sources of funding for future services. The Town should also ensure that any funds invested in transit are reinforced by land use decisions which make the most of these investments. The broadest range of options possible should be considered to provide the routing and service frequency needed to make transit a viable alternative to driving."

Public transit services will continue to be supplemented by ridesharing and vanpooling programs, including those implemented through the County's 511 program. These include employer programs for telecommuting and flexible work schedules, reduced transit fare programs, school ride matching programs, and incentives which create alternatives to solo occupancy driving."

The corresponding general plan policies within the Mobility Section of the Draft 2030 Plan pertaining to supporting public transit service in Danville are as follows:

Multi-Modal Circulation Policy

11.10	Recognize the special needs of persons with mobility limitations, including youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities, in the planning and operation of Danville's transportation system and services.	• Local Transit Plan • Intergovernmental Coordination • Traffic Safety Program

Transportation Choice Policies

13.01	Support an expanded bus transit system in Danville which is integrated with surrounding communities and coordinated through CCCTA (County Connection) and other transportation agencies in the Tri-Valley area.	• Intergovernmental Coordination • Local Transit Plan • TRAFFIX
13.02	Encourage private and quasi-public transit services which complement the CCCTA public transit system, such as shuttle buses, circulators, deviated fixed route services, and corporate vanpools. *Such services can effectively expand the reach and frequency of the transit system, making it more practical to travel without a private automobile. Some of these services operate on an on-demand basis and others may operate on a regular schedule.*	• Local Transit Plan • Intergovernmental Coordination
13.03	Support the development of passenger amenities which facilitate transit use, such as information on scheduled arrival times and appropriately located bus stops.	• Local Transit Plan • Street Beautification Guidelines • Downtown Master Plan/ Ordinance
13.04	Encourage ridesharing, car and vanpooling, infrastructure (such as the Sycamore Valley Road park and ride lot) and other alternative modes to the services which reduce the need to travel by single-occupant automobile. *(Editor's Note: incorporates former 15.04)*	• Transportation Systems Management Measures • Intergovernmental Coordination • TRAFFIX

13.06	Review all planned road improvement projects to ensure that the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with special needs are considered.	• Capital Improvement Program
13.07	Support educational programs which promote bicycle and pedestrian safety, and the health benefits of bicycling and walking.	• Street Smarts • Safe Routes to School
13.08	Support the concepts of car-sharing and bike-sharing as an alternative to private car and bike ownership.	• Development Review • Downtown Master Plan/ Ordinance
13.09	Improve access to Downtown Danville for transit-dependent workers, seniors, and persons traveling without an automobile. *This could include additional pedestrian and bicycle crossings of San Ramon Creek, better connections between the Sycamore Valley Road park-and-ride lot and Downtown, and similar improvements. It could also include improved paratransit for seniors and others with mobility limitations who rely on downtown services and businesses.*	• Capital Improvement Program • Grant Funding • Local Transit Plan
Regional Leadership Policies		
16.09	Support continued bus access from Danville to BART stations, Amtrak, Altamont Commuter Express, and other rail systems.	• Intergovernmental Coordination

Question Topic Area #3

Could you please summarize the recommendations from the Downtown Parking Assessment Study? Were the topics of parking standard reductions, P/TDM strategies, etc. considered or recommended?

Response

The following narrative in the Mobility Section of the Draft 2030 Plan provides a summary of the Downtown Parking Management Plan (followed by pertinent draft policies):

"Downtown Parking Management Plan

In 2010, the Town approved a plan to improve parking for Downtown business patrons by redirecting employee parking to the perimeter of the Downtown area. The plan is part of a broader Economic Development Strategy to promote Downtown Danville's businesses. The Plan adjusts hourly limits on parking and modifies the Employee Permit Parking Program to apply higher fees for parking in high-demand areas. The plan also addresses licensing of valet parking, parking enforcement, and other parking-related topics."

Proposed Revisions or Actions

The Downtown Parking Management Strategy will should be periodically revised in response to future development approvals, transportation improvements, economic conditions, Downtown business needs, changes to the Downtown Business District Ordinance, and future parking supply and demand studies. In the event that Downtown is formally designated as a Priority Development Area (PDA), new approaches to parking management may be needed to reinforce the area's role as a pedestrian district."

<u>Multi-Modal Circulation Policy</u>

11.09	Implement parking management strategies in Downtown Danville which meet the needs of local businesses, patrons, residents, and employees.	• Downtown Parking Management Plan

<u>Integrating Land Use and Circulation Policies</u>

14.07	Support the use of parking lots which can be shared by multiple users, particularly for activities with different peak demand times. *This could include shared parking lots for public uses, such as local schools and Town parks, as well as private uses such as Downtown offices (who use the spaces during the day) and restaurants (who use the spaces in the evening). It could also include the designation of additional commuter parking spaces or satellite parking spaces within parking lots that are underutilized during commute hours.*	•Downtown Parking Management Plan • Development Review

14.08	Allow reduced parking requirements for projects which are likely to have lower rates of vehicle use (such as senior housing) or which include shared parking facilities or other provisions which reduce off-street parking needs.	• Zoning Regulations • Development Review

Question Topic Area #4

Are you anticipating that a specific plan will be developed for the area, or do you feel the 2030 General Plan, once adopted, will be sufficient?

Response

The Draft Danville 2030 General Plan strives to fully integrate the concepts of the PDA into Danville's future. We can provide you a link to the full document to allow you to better grasp the nature and scope of the PDA discussion. As indicated above, the Draft Danville 2030 General Plan and the associate General Plan EIR are anticipated to be circulated for public review in the next couple of months.

Questions you may have regarding this material may be directed to my attention at (925) 314-3305 at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Gailey, AICP
Chief of Planning