Appendix C

Prehistoric and Historic Archeology Memorandum

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Memo

To: Megan Wessel, Circlepoint

From: John Holson, Pacific Legacy

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Re: Constraints Analysis for Central Estuary Plan, Oakland, Prehistoric and Historic Archaeology

Pacific Legacy conducted a record search at the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System (NWIC) to determine previously documented cultural resources within the Central Estuary Study Area. The purpose of the study was 1) to identify previously documented resources within the study area, and 2) determine the potential for historical and archaeological resources within the study area. The results of the record search were shared with JRP Historical Consultants who will be addressing the built environment.

Less than 15 percent of the Central Estuary Study Area has been inspected for prehistoric and historic cultural resources. The majority of these studies lie in the southeast portion of the study area in the general vicinity of High Street. Several of the reports relate to the High Street Overhead Seismic Retrofit Project along the State Route 880 Corridor and High Street and the 42nd Avenue/High Street Improvement Project. Cultural resources studies were also undertaken for the Park and High Street Bridge Replacement projects. Several smaller studies were undertaken, including those along the tidal canal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a 7-acre parcel along Alameda Avenue. From Fruitvale Avenue northwest to the edge of the study area, one small study has been completed along the waterfront. While the southeastern portion of the study area has been the subject of several projects, including subsurface testing, very little is known about the archaeology of the northwestern portion of the study area.

No previously documented prehistoric archaeological sites have been recorded within the study area. However, several prehistoric sites have been documented near the study area. These include CA-ALA-316 and CA-ALA-11 to the south of the project area. To the north and west of the project area CA-ALA-314, CA-ALA-10, and CA-ALA-15 have been recorded. Near the northern edge of the project area a "shell mound" has been noted on the 1878 Thompson and West Map. Prehistoric occupation in the San Francisco Bay Area has been documented since cal 8000 B.C. For the most part the older sites are found in the interior valleys. Along the bay coastline, several sites have been dated to what is termed the Middle Archaic (3500 to 500 cal B.C.), and the Initial Upper Archaic (500 cal B.C. to cal A.D. 430). Bay margin prehistoric site constituents typically include a dark ashy soil containing fire-altered rock, food debris (shell, faunal bone), ground, flaked and pecked stone artifacts, shell and bone artifacts, and baked clay. It is not uncommon for these prehistoric sites or shell mounds to contain burials. The project area, before rechannelization, is in close proximity to two freshwater streams. Observations from other areas of the Bay suggest that prehistoric occupation was concentrated along major watercourses with a series of sites located at the bay margin and inland.

Commercial and residential development in the project area since the 1850's also contributes to the lack of surface visibility of prehistoric resources. Leveling and filling of marshlands to make

it suitable for development most likely has obscured surface manifestations of prehistoric archaeological sites. This can be seen at CA-ALA-11 where the cultural deposits have been spread over several city blocks. Furthermore, alluvial deposition and stabilization of the estuary by natural processes presents the potential for buried resources. In a study conducted for the High Street Overhead project, fill material was found at depths ranging from 1.6 to 3 feet below the current ground surface while Middle to Late Holocene deposits were found in depths ranging from 0.8 to 5 feet. Geomorphological analysis for the High Street project concluded that the upper 6 feet of soil corresponded to the maximum depth for buried Middle to Late Holocene-age land surfaces upon which prehistoric sites may have been located.

Based on the Records Search review, it is expected that several types and classes of archaeological sites may be present in the study area, although they may not be visible on the surface. Prehistoric sites would likely include midden sites with potential habitation debris and human internments. In general, prehistoric resources have been found along the bayshore, in close proximity to drainages and around geomorphic features such as rock outcrops. Depending on the soil types and both prehistoric and historic sediment depositional episodes, some portions of the study area may have a moderate potential for the presence of buried prehistoric resources.

Two previously documented historic archaeological sites are lie within the study area. One site (P-01-001784) is a spur of the Southern Pacific Railway. The second site, P-01-010921, consists of 10 historic period features, four of which were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. They were discovered during construction for the High Street Seismic project in 2008 and are within City Blocks 2241 and 2242. Historic period development in the study area was minimal in the 1860s but by 1897 the area was substantially developed for both commercial and residential use. The mix of residential and commercial use suggests that several classes of historic archaeological sites are present and the potential for encountering historic-era archaeological resources is likely high. Historic-era archaeological resources may include but are not limited to: the archaeological remains of both commercial and residential building foundations and walls and transportation systems such as railroad sidings, roadways, wharves, or railroad tracks. Archaeological features most likely to be abundant would be archaeological artifact accumulations containing bottles, cans, ceramics and other materials found in trash pits or privies.