2. Introduction

With this Study, the City of Lafayette seeks to identify options for and the feasibility of a Class I bikeway/ADA-compliant pedestrian and bicycle facility along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW located north of Downtown Lafayette in Contra Costa County. The EBMUD Aqueduct runs east-west through Downtown Lafayette and parallels State Route (SR) 24, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Mt. Diablo Boulevard before it turns northeast to cross Pleasant Hill Road and continues to the Walnut Creek border. As shown in **Figure 2-1**, the Pathway Study Area extends from Risa Road in the west to Brown Avenue in the east.

The City's interest in a trail along the EBMUD Aqueduct was identified in both the 2006 Lafayette Bikeways Master Plan (BMP) and the 2009 Revised Draft Downtown Lafayette Specific Plan (DSP), which has not yet been adopted as of November 2011. The BMP identifies a potential pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW as Projects 10A through 10D of the Lafayette Proposed Bikeway Network. Project 10A consists of a feasibility study that would identify the opportunities and constraints of constructing a Class I bike path along the EBMUD Aqueduct between the Walter Costa Trail and Brown Avenue. This was identified as a high priority project. The BMP states that the study may identify particular sections which may be most beneficial and practical to implement. It further states that the study should identify opportunities and constraints to providing connections to the facility from adjoining developments and nearby streets as well as needed improvements to trail crossings at streets. As shown in the BMP City of Lafayette Proposed Bikeways map, the proposed pathway along the EBMUD ROW would connect with a proposed Class I bike path through the Contra Costa Jewish Day School and connecting with the Walter Costa Trail, a proposed Class III bike route along Happy Valley Road, the existing Class I bike path along Happy Valley Creek, the existing Class I bike path that parallels Brown Avenue to the west, and an existing Class III bike route along Brown Avenue. The DSP identifies a Class I bike pathway parallel to and south of SR 24 freeway between El Nido Ranch Road and Brown Avenue.

The City has considered a 10-foot wide, paved, non-motorized trail that would extend 1.5 miles along the Aqueduct from the Lafayette Reservoir to Brown Avenue, but recognized that a feasibility study was needed to determine how the pathway would cross a major driveway and various streets, how it might address areas with steep terrain, and to estimate construction and maintenance costs. A pathway on EBMUD ROW would need to be approved by EBMUD and would be subject to requirements specified in a lease agreement.

For this Study, the City has partnered with EBMUD, Caltrans, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), and BART to determine if pedestrian and bicycle improvements are feasible and desirable along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW. This Study is funded by a Caltrans Community Planning Grant.

2.1 Goals

The following goals guided the development of draft alignment options and design strategies for this Study.

GOAL 1: CONTINUOUS PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PATHWAY

Determine the feasibility of a continuous pedestrian and bicycle pathway from Risa Road to Brown Avenue along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW, identifying required segments and where additional public or private property may be required.

GOAL 2: TRANSPORTATION PATHWAY SEGMENTS

Analyze feasibility and develop conceptual design for segments to conform to Caltrans Chapter 1000 Class I Bikeway, American's with Disability Act Requirements and EBMUD construction requirements.

GOAL 3: RECREATIONAL PATHWAY SEGMENTS

Analyze feasibility and develop conceptual design for segments to conform to Caltrans Chapter 1000 multipurpose trail guidelines, Americans with Disabilities Act Access Guidelines (ADAAG) for recreational areas and EBMUD construction requirements.

GOAL 4: IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING

Develop a funding, financing and implementation strategy identifying eligible grant sources and/or potential development requirements supporting construction.

GOAL 5: MAINTENANCE FUNDING AND RESPONSIBILITY

Identify management, maintenance and law enforcement funding strategy for segments, including sponsoring agency and associated revenue sources.

GOAL 6: COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Enhance the visual and landscape character of the EBMUD Aqueduct and the adjoining City ROW.

GOAL 7: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Design the pathway segments to respond to safety and security needs as well as neighborhood privacy concerns.

GOAL 8: PATHWAY CONNECTIONS

Provide pathway connections to adjacent streets and land uses including transit, shopping, office and residential areas.

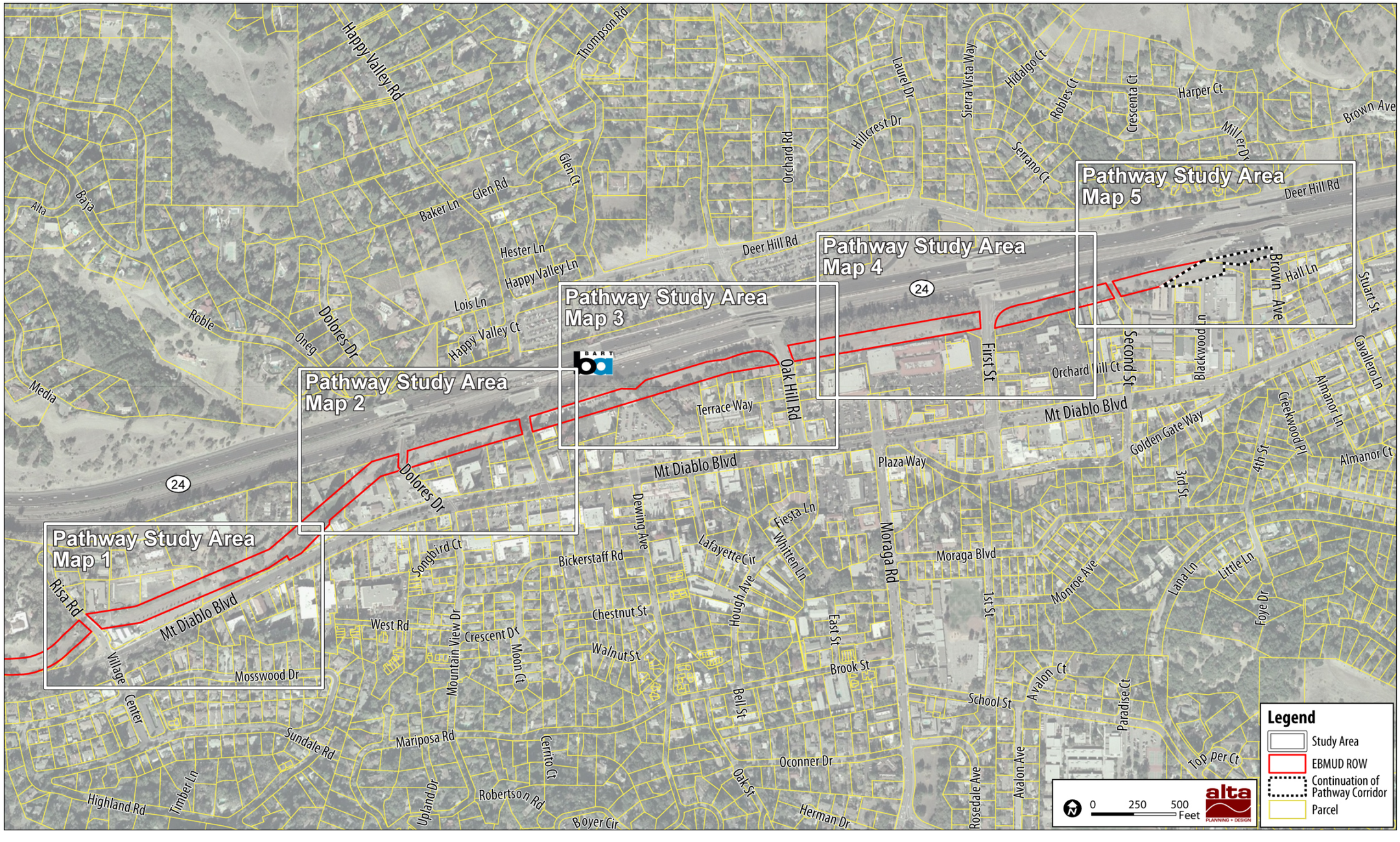

Figure 2-1: Pathway Study Area

This page intentionally left blank.

2.2 Agency Coordination

The project team worked closely with the numerous agencies that have an interest in the pathway under study. The primary vehicle for collaboration has been the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which includes representatives from East Bay Municipal Utility District, Caltrans, BART, East Bay Regional Parks District, and City of Lafayette's Engineering, Public Works, Planning, and Parks, Recreation and Trails Departments. The TAG met throughout the preparation of the Study[7] and reviewed all working papers. The project team met separately with EBMUD staff on August 18, 2010 to discuss EBMUD parameters and requirements for construction of a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW. The project team met with Caltrans staff on January 5, 2011 to identify items to be studied prior to Caltrans' review of an encroachment permit for the pathway and applicable Caltrans standards associated with reconfiguration of the Oak Hill Road off-ramp.

2.3 Public Outreach

The community has been involved in developing the Study from the start of the project. Public outreach efforts include:

- **Citizen's Advisory Committee Meetings.** The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) is composed of community members who represent a cross-section of the stakeholders who may be affected by the pathway under study. The CAC has met throughout the project[8] and reviewed all working papers. Comments from the CAC have been incorporated into the Study.
- **Project Website and E-mail List.** The City hosted a website for the project (www.lafayettepathway.com), which described the Study and Study Area, identified public input opportunities and listed key contacts. Drafts of the Study chapters were posted to the website as they were completed. Persons visiting the website could send comments directly through the website and sign up for email updates. The City posted the Public Review Draft Feasibility & Options Study for a Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW on the project website for review and comment. Comments on the draft study were accepted between August 1, 2011 and September 30, 2011. **Appendix E** presents comments received during the public review period and response to comments received.
- **Public Site Tour #1.** Lafayette community members were invited to participate in a site walk-through held on October 2, 2010. Approximately 15 people attended, including several members of the TAC and the CAC and the Mayor of Lafayette. Tour participants and the project team discussed potential planning and design issues for a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW and at each of the pathway/roadway crossings, which needed to be addressed in the Study.
- **Focus Group Meeting.** Adjacent property and business owners were invited to participate in a focus group to discuss their concerns and hopes for the pathway. Fourteen people attended the November 10, 2010 group, representing small business owners, developers, landowners, and residential and commercial property managers. The focus group helped form a picture of the current use of the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW, the value of constructing a pathway along the ROW and identified adjacent property owner's concerns that the Study needed to address.

[7] TAG meetings were held on August 19, 2010, October 27, 2010, and February 8, 2011.
[8] CAC meetings were held on September 23, 2010, November 17, 2010, March 2, 2011, and July 19, 2011.

- **Public Meeting #1.** The project team presented existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints of the pathway under study at the first public meeting held on December 1, 2010. Participants were asked to vote on how they would use each segment of pathway. Twenty-eight people attended.
- **Public Site Tour #2.** The project team led a second walk-through of the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW on May 7, 2010. During the site tour, the project team described the draft proposed design for the pathway and intersection treatments, responded to questions, and collected public input. Seventeen people attended.
- **Public Meeting #2.** At the second public meeting, held on May 12, 2011, the project team presented the draft proposed designs for the pathway under study; findings and concerns of the TAG, CAC, focus group, and public to date; estimated construction and maintenance costs; and potential funding sources. Participants were asked to provide responses to specific questions regarding the pathway design and alignment and/or voice other project-related questions or comments.
- **Presentations to the City's Commissions and Committees.** Following release of the Public Review Draft Study, the City invited members of the City's Commissions and Committees to two meetings at which the Draft Study was presented. The meetings were held on August 15th and 22nd. Participants heard a presentation on and reviewed boards showing the Study process, recommended pathway and roadway intersection improvements, estimated costs, potential funding sources, and next steps. The City and consultants answered questions related to the Draft Study.
- **Planning Commission.** As a follow-up to the August presentations to the City's Commissions and Committees, the City addressed questions and received comments on the Public Review Draft Plan at the Planning Commission's September 19th meeting.
- **Lafayette Homeowner's Council.** As a follow-up to the August presentations to the City's Commissions and Committees, the City addressed questions and received comments on the Public Review Draft Plan at the Planning Commission's September 22nd meeting.
- **Circulation Commission Meeting.** After the public review period closed on September 30th, the City presented the public comments and draft response to comments to the Circulation Commission at its October 17th meeting.
- **City Council Meetings.** Formal comments received from the public review were incorporated where appropriate into a final draft feasibility study, which City staff presented to the Council on November 14, 2011. At the February 13, 2012 meeting, the Council accepted the Final Feasibility and Options Study for a pedestrian and bicycle pathway Along the EBMUD Aqueduct Right-of-Way as modified; directed that the project remain in the Bikeways Master Plan; and directed staff to pursue next steps as identified in the staff report. **Appendix E** presents the staff report and meeting minutes from the November 14, 2011 City Council meeting and the staff report from the February 13, 2012 City Council meeting.

If the City decides to construct a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW, additional meetings with impacted private property owners and managers would be conducted during subsequent phases of planning and design development. Public outreach conducted for this Study identified a number of stakeholders who should be involved in future pathway development efforts.

2.4 Study Organization

The Study is comprised of seven chapters as outlined below. It begins with a description of the history and goals of the Study; existing policies and regulations within the Study Area; applicable pathway design standards; and existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints for a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW. It continues with an analysis of pathway alignment and roadway crossing design options, identification of the draft preferred options, a cost-benefit analysis, and a funding and maintenance strategy for the pathway. The Study concludes with a phasing plan and identification of required next steps.

- **Chapter 1: Executive Summary.**
- **Chapter 2: Introduction.** This chapter discusses the history of the Study and presents the Study goals. It outlines agency coordination for and public involvement in the Study.
- **Chapter 3: Policy Context and Design Guidelines.** This chapter summarizes the existing policies and regulations within the Study Area. The design guidelines describe and illustrate the three pathways design standards considered for a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW.
- **Chapter 4: Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints.** This chapter includes discussion of existing surrounding land uses, site topography, available ROW, the pathway relationship to adjacent land uses, safety and security considerations, roadway crossings, and environmental issues. This chapter identifies and discusses opportunities and constraints related to implementation of a pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW.
- **Chapter 5: Options Evaluation and Preferred Options.** This chapter presents the conceptual engineering design, traffic operations analysis, and recommended crossing improvements. Pathways meeting two design standards are evaluated: a Class I bikeway standard and an ADA-accessible pathway standard. Each individual roadway crossing is discussed independently and those crossings that warrant more than one alternative design strategy include discussion of each option. This chapter identifies the draft preferred options for a pathway along the EBMUD Aqueduct ROW and with encroachments into Caltrans ROW.
- **Chapter 6: Funding and Maintenance Strategy.** This chapter identifies cost estimates and potential funding sources for construction, maintenance, and operation of the draft preferred options. A benefit-cost analysis that considers the return on the City's investment over the 30-year life of the pathway follows the cost estimates. The chapter concludes with a description of possible funding sources for construction and maintenance of the pathway.
- **Chapter 7: Phasing Plan and Next Steps.** This chapter presents preliminary phasing of the draft preferred options and required next steps. The project segments established in *Chapter 5: Options Evaluation and Preferred Options* are presented here in terms of their recommended implementation phasing. The Next Steps section describes several issues that will require additional analysis and work to address.

This page intentionally left blank.