

AGENDA: August 5, 2004

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Commission
RE: Status Report on Related Highway 1 Projects

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission accept this Status Report on activities related to the Highway 1 Project.

DISCUSSION

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Caltrans has resumed right-of-way activities to secure easements to construct the soundwalls, and has met with utility operators in the area and expects to resolve all right-of-way issues by March 2005. Caltrans is working directly with the City of Santa Cruz on construction phasing and proposed detour routes during the construction process.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff recommendation for the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) has been released and the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project is recommended for programming in FY 05/06. While this is one year later than requested by the RTC, Caltrans has indicated that they will still be able to meet the proposed August 2005 construction schedule. Inclusion of this project in the regular STIP allocation, rather than GARVEE bonds (considered as back up plan) will save Santa Cruz County \$5 -12 million over time.

Pedestrian Access over Morrissey Boulevard Interchange

In mid-June, RTC staff attended a meeting coordinated by Assemblymember John Laird's office to discuss issues related to pedestrian access through the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange. Participants included Commissioner Emily Reilly, Santa Cruz City staff, and staff from Caltrans, California Highway Patrol, the Metro Transit District, DeLaveaga Elementary School, and a concerned parent. Pedestrian and bicycle safety has long been an issue at that location, and the closure of Branciforte Elementary School will mean an additional 250 children will be crossing the highway by various modes and routes at the beginning of the school year to attend DeLaveaga Elementary School. Several immediate and near term steps were identified for consideration and approval by Caltrans and the City of Santa Cruz.

Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project – Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED)

Following the Public Information meetings in late April, the project consultant team is preparing a report on the outreach effort, including a summary of the key issues raised at the meetings and subsequent comments submitted by the public. This report and the regular Quarterly Progress Report will be presented to the Commission at the August TPW meeting. This material will also be shared with the Highway 1 Construction Authority.

The environmental consultant team has completed a major milestone in submitting to Caltrans the *Draft Historical Resources Report* and *Draft Archaeological Survey Report and Extended Phase 1 Proposal*. Once Caltrans has reviewed these documents they will be presented to the RTC and HCA, and be available for review by the public.

At Caltrans request, the Board of Supervisors on June 22nd authorized the Real Estate Division of the County Public Works Department to support the RTC with right-of-way services to secure a right-of-entry to complete a pedestrian archaeological survey on one parcel. Subject to the Caltrans's concurrence with the findings of the *Extended Phase 1 Archaeological Report*, it may be necessary to pursue rights-of-entry for subsurface evaluation at select locations on up to 10-to12 parcels. Staff is working closely with the County Real Estate Division to ensure all state and federal regulations are met, and that sufficient resources are available to complete this task.

The consultant has submitted a *Draft Supplemental Project Study Report (PSR)* for the southern section of the project, from State Park Drive to San Andreas/Larkin Valley Road, to Caltrans its review. While this conceptual design level report is largely a formality, as we are currently engaged in the preliminary design phase of the project, the *Supplemental PSR* is an important document to assist Caltrans in programming adequate funds for project oversight of the entire project. After Caltrans review, it will be presented to the RTC and the HCA.

Other reports that should be available for presentation to the RTC, HCA and general public in the next few months include: the Draft Existing Conditions Report, Assessment of Potential Pedestrian/Bicycle Overcrossings, and a White Paper on Dedicated Bus/HOV Connections from Local Streets to the Median HOV Lane on Highway 1.

AMBAG's Updated Regional Travel Model is still not available for use by the consultants to begin work on traffic projections and operational analysis. AMBAG has hired consultant services to complete the model validation process and indicates that model will be available in mid-August.

The Project Development Team for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project continues to meet monthly.

Highway 1 Construction Authority

The HCA Board did not meet in the month of July. However, a Consultant Evaluation Committee was formed and has met a number of times in June and July for the purpose of interviewing and considering consultant teams proposing to provide staffing and project management services to the HCA. The Committee is comprised of HCA Board members Ellen Pirie, Jan Beautz, and Alternate Board member Marcela Tavantzis, and staff from the County Public Works Department, SCCRTC, and SCMTD, and a private sector representative provided through the Santa Cruz County Business Council. The Committee is working to make a recommendation of the top ranked consultant team at the next meeting of the HCA Board of Directors on Friday, August 6th.

The RTC will continue to provide the project management and oversight activities for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project until the transfer of authority and responsibilities to the HCA is completed.

Expenditure Plan Development

As of this writing, a special meeting of the County Board of Supervisors and the SCCRTC is scheduled for July 27th, to consider adoption of the Transportation Sales Tax Measure and Expenditure Plan to be placed on the November 2004 ballot.

Design Build Legislation – SB 1793 (McPherson)

SB 1793 has been designated as a “budget trailer” bill exempting it from the normal legislative deadlines to allow time for the development of language that creates “alternative methods of financing and delivering projects...” The bill was amended in the Assembly Transportation Committee on June 23rd ([Attachment 1](#)) to allow this bill to serve as a vehicle for a conference committee that would be established to take a comprehensive approach at developing proposals for design build, and private financing for transportation infrastructure projects statewide. Staff will continue to monitor progress on this bill.

SUMMARY

Efforts are well underway on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project to complete right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation plans. For construction to begin as planned in Fall 2005, a funding source must be secured by March 2005. The report on the findings of the Public Information meetings for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project and the regular Quarterly Progress Report will be presented at the September RTC meeting. The administrative drafts of a number of milestone documents are currently under review by Caltrans and the Project Development Team. These documents will be released over the next few months. The HCA Board is working on establishing its staffing in order to implement the transaction of project responsibilities from the RTC to the HCA.

Attachments:

- 1) SB 1793 (McPherson) as amended in Assembly Transportation Committee on June 23, 2004

Prepared by: Kim Shultz

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