

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission  
**FROM:** Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director  
**RE:** Status Report on Related Highway 1 Projects

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission accept the Fourth Quarterly Progress Report from the consultant on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project, and receive a Status Report on other activities related to the Highway 1 Projects.

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**DISCUSSION**

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

Chris Metzger, Nolte Project Manager, will present the Fourth Quarterly Progress Report (Attachment 1) for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. As part of this progress report, Mr. Metzger will outline a timeline for the process to identify potential additional project alternatives to be studied through the PA/ED process.

One of the factors influencing consideration of additional project alternatives, are the comments received from the Public Information Meeting (scoping) meetings held in April 2004. Ben Strumwasser, Public Affairs Management, will present an overview of the *Draft Public Information Summary Report*, summarizing the outreach efforts and comments received at the public information meetings held on April 26 and 28, 2004. The *Draft Summary Report* was included in the agenda packet for the August 19<sup>th</sup> Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW) meeting.

Staff has posted the entire *Public Information Summary Report* on the RTC website as a cost effective alternative to publishing a newsletter focusing primarily on the comments received at the public information meetings, as originally proposed in the Public Information Plan. Staff proposes instead to focus the time and resources required to publish the first newsletter on discussion of the project alternatives to be studied through the environmental process and the transfer of project responsibilities from the RTC to the Highway 1 Construction Authority.

In response to requests at the August TPW meeting, staff has revised the summary of the results of the traffic analysis for the Highway 1 Widening Project (Attachment 2). As previously mentioned, all this material is taken from the Caltrans *Project Study Report (PSR)* and *Traffic Analysis Report*, dated July 2002. Comparable data for parallel arterial routes is not available from the Caltrans analysis but will be calculated through the PA/ED process using AMBAG's Updated Travel Demand Model.

As of the writing of this staff report, the project consultants and staff are still awaiting release of AMBAG's Updated Regional Travel Model to begin work on traffic projections and operational analysis.

On other fronts, staff has requested the assistance of the County's Real Estate Division to secure Rights of Entry on 5 parcels within the highway corridor to conduct subsurface archaeological excavation as proposed in the *Extended Phase I Archaeological Report*. The County's Real Estate Division is the only public agency qualified to provide these services consistent with state and federal regulations in Santa Cruz county.

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

### Highway 1 Construction Authority

The HCA Board will meet on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, and will receive presentations of the Fourth Quarterly Progress Report and the *Draft Public Information Summary Report* as part of the transition process of transferring management of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project to the HCA.

County staff, serving as interim staff to the HCA, are conducting negotiations with the consultant team lead by S & C Engineering to assume administrative and project management services to the HCA for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. The critical path in transferring responsibilities from the RTC to the HCA will be execution of Master Fund Allocation Agreement and Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to authorize the expenditure of project funds by the HCA. County staff have prepared preliminary drafts of these documents for Caltrans review, and assistance has been provided by RTC staff to assist in expediting the process.

As the main contract with S & C Engineering may be subject to a preaward audit by Caltrans, the HCA Board of Directors authorized a limited Notice to Proceed with the S & C Engineering team to begin start up activities for the HCA to assume project responsibilities.

### Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

The Highway 1/17 Project Development Team met on August 10<sup>th</sup> and the principal focus was on a presentation of the preliminary project phasing plan for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project. Staff from the City of Santa Cruz requested additional information to complete their review of the proposed detour routes and transportation management plan for the project.

Caltrans will make a presentation of the phased construction plans and other important elements of the project at the RTC meeting in December.

The project is on schedule to begin construction in August 2005, subject to an allocation (release) of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds. The release of funds may be delayed due to the continuing state budget crisis. RTC staff asked Caltrans to estimate potential cost increases if the project is delayed. This information will be useful if STIP funding allocations are withheld by the CTC and the RTC wants to consider the use of GARVEE bonds to keep the project on schedule.

### Design Build Legislation

SB 1793 (McPherson) together with SB 1210 (Torlakson), and AB 3048 (Oropeza) are expected to be considered in conference committee between the Assembly and Senate to fashion legislation that addresses advanced project delivery methods (including design-build and design-sequencing) and

alternative financing methods. Action is anticipated prior to adjournment of the state legislature at the end of the month. Although Santa Cruz County was originally included in SB 1793 as one of the five counties for a design-build project, it was dropped out when the state requested two of the five project slots. As of the writing of the staff report, the Commission Chair and staff are working to rectify the exclusion. Staff will provide an oral update at the RTC meeting.

## **SUMMARY**

The Commission's consultants for the Highway 1 HOV Widening project will provide oral presentations on the overall project and public information activities. Efforts are underway by the HCA, County, and RTC staff to transition oversight of the project to the HCA and hire the selected consultant team to provide administrative and project management oversight of the Highway 1 Project. Staff will provide an oral update regarding Assembly-Senate Conference Committee activity to amend SB 1793 (McPherson's design-build legislation) to reinstate Santa Cruz County.

### Attachments:

- 1) Fourth Quarterly Progress Report on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project, dated August 17, 2004.
- 2) Revised Summary of the Results of the Traffic Analysis for the Highway 1 Widening Project, September 2004.

Prepared by: Kim Shultz

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