

**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 this Status Report on activities related to the Highway 1 Project

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**DISCUSSION**

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

The Project Development Team met on November 9, 2004, to review the status of the project. Final design is approximately 95% complete. An exception to the statewide freeze on right-of-way funding was granted for the project and the acquisition process is expected to be completed after the first of the year. An updated construction cost estimate still meets the project budget, however, current escalated concrete and steel prices have reduced the available contingency funds. Caltrans proposes to make a presentation to the RTC on the proposed project at the February 2005 meeting.

A Cooperative Agreement for the Public Awareness Campaign (PAC) is in final review with the City of Santa Cruz. Similarly, Caltrans and the City continue to discuss the final details of the traffic management plan, detour plan, pedestrian/bicycle access and whether special traffic management services provided by local police are needed.

The start of construction is dependent on the availability of programmed state funds. This issue is the subject of another item on this agenda.

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

Staff and consultants are updating project materials and preparing public notices consistent with the approved process to select alternatives for the PA/ED. Based on input provided at the November TPW meeting, the project consultants are revising the Project Alternatives report, including: renaming the Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative, identifying all significant transportation system improvements assumed to be in place as part of the No Build alternative, and providing order of magnitude cost estimates for each of the alternatives.

The updated Project Alternatives Report will be posted on the RTC's website and referenced in all public meeting notifications made for the public hearing in January. Staff proposes to announce the public meetings through press releases and email/postal mail notices to those individuals who have signed up to receive information on the project at previous public

information meetings and through the RTC's website. Notices will also be sent to those community groups that have shown a particular interest in the project and alternative methods to address transportation demand along the corridor.

The Highway 1 Construction Authority will have an opportunity to provide input on the Project Alternatives at its meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Staff is working with RTC Chair Jan Beautz to secure suitable facilities in mid-January for the RTC to hold an evening public hearing and subsequently make a decision on the alternatives to study through the PA/ED process.

### Highway 1 Bike/Pedestrian Crossings - Planning

Staff and consultants met in the afternoon of November 18<sup>th</sup> with representatives of all jurisdictions along the Highway 1 project limits to begin the process to determine the best locations for proposed pedestrian/bicycle crossings. Participants reviewed preliminary base mapping showing large trip attractors (such as schools and employment centers) and existing bikeways and highway crossings.

Through this process, participants identified where improvements could be made to existing road crossings, specifically where bridge structures will have to be rebuilt as part of the highway widening project. Participants then identified areas where new bicycle/pedestrian crossings were appropriate and needed. The goal was not to pinpoint an exact location, but to identify service areas where bicycle and pedestrian demand was likely to be highest.

The next step in the planning process will be to meet with pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups, representatives from the school districts and RTC's advisory committees to get further information on preferred service areas. That meeting is anticipated to occur in late January/early February.

With information gathered in these first two meetings conceptual site analysis can begin on potential crossing locations within the respective service areas to optimize user benefits and minimize impacts to the community. The consultants will present their findings to the RTC prior to meeting with neighborhood and community groups as part of the environmental review process leading to a recommendation on the best locations to build the bicycle/pedestrian crossings.

### Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA Board will not meet in December and the next scheduled meeting is planned for January 7, 2005. Subject to direction received at the November TPW meeting, staff and consultants plan on presenting the Highway 1 Project Alternatives Options to the HCA at their January 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. In the meantime, work continues with Caltrans on the Cooperative and Master Agreements necessary for the HCA to assume responsibility for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project.

## **SUMMARY**

Caltrans will make a presentation on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project at the February RTC meeting. The Highway 1 Consultants are updating the Project Alternatives report in preparation for the evening public hearing in late January (*the date, time and location to be announced at the meeting*). The first step in identifying the preferred locations for bicycle/pedestrian crossings of Highway 1 was completed. The HCA Board will not meet in December and their next regular scheduled meeting is planned for January 7, 2005.

Prepared by: **Kim Shultz**

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