

AGENDA: January 20, 2005

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

DISCUSSION

Note: the staff report for the Public Hearing on the selection of project alternatives is the subject of the next agenda item.

Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project - PA/ED Schedule

The project continues to progress on schedule (expected completion date of February 2008), and within budget. Selection of project alternatives, expected in the next month, will mark the beginning of the next major work effort.

The project schedule has been impacted by the continued delay in access to the AMBAG Travel Forecast Model. The original project schedule, developed with AMBAG's input, had assumed availability of the Travel Model in November 2003. AMBAG completed production of the model in November 2004, and subsequently introduced a revised model use agreement requiring a trust account deposit. As of this writing, staff and the project consultant are reviewing options to satisfy this latest requirement. The ongoing 14 month delay in delivery of the model has resulted in a 9 month delay to the overall project schedule. The end date has now been moved from May 2007 to February 2008.

The project consultant is confident some of the delay in the project schedule can be made up, however, the project budget may be impacted by the delay. An assessment of the potential impact to project costs attributed to delay of the travel model will be conducted once the travel model is in hand.

At an upcoming meeting, staff will present a report on the consultant budget with recommended actions regarding the release of the next increment of funding for the consultant contract.

The next meeting of the Project Development Team (PDT) is scheduled for January 27th.

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA Board met on January 7th to receive a presentation on the list of project alternatives for the Highway 1 PA/ED process, and to discuss the status of negotiations with Caltrans on the Cooperative Agreement for the Highway 1 project. The Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans is necessary to transfer responsibility for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 project from the RTC to the HCA. The County Public Works Department and County Counsel reported that negotiations are ongoing (see Attachment 1).

Alternatively, the County Public Works Department, serving as interim staff to the HCA, recommends that PA/ED activities remain the responsibility of the RTC, while the HCA pursues the development of local, state, and federal funding sources for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project. There was agreement that the HCA will transition to a quarterly meeting schedule to keep abreast of the project status and negotiations with Caltrans on the Cooperative Agreement. Accordingly, the next meeting of the HCA is scheduled for April 1, 2005.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

A comprehensive presentation on the project funding, schedule, design features (such as soundwalls, landscaping, bicycle/pedestrian facilities on cross streets and pavement type), public awareness campaign and construction phasing/street closure plan is scheduled for the February 3rd RTC meeting. Details about the following issues raised at previous RTC meetings will be included in the presentation: 1) Providing readily accessible and current public information on the Highway 1/17 project at the library and on the project website (found at: www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/scr_1_17); 2) Providing pedestrian and bicycle access via underpasses and overpasses; and, 3) Determining how an extension in the southbound direction to the Soquel Drive Interchange could be coordinated with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane project.

Right of Way and Utility Relocation are the critical path to submitting the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) allocation funding request in June 2005. The goal is to finalize pre-construction activities as soon as possible so the project is "Ready to List" to better compete for limited state funds over the next year.

SUMMARY

Gaining access to AMBAG's Travel Forecast Model continues to be the critical path on the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project schedule. Staff and consultants are reviewing options to satisfy the requirements of AMBAG's Model Use Agreement. The Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA) has not been able to complete negotiation of the Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to assume responsibility for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project and has decided to meet on a quarterly basis to accept project status reports while the RTC retains responsibility for project oversight (Attachment 1). Caltrans will make a comprehensive presentation of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project at the February 3rd RTC meeting.

Attachment:

1. Report on the State Cooperative Agreement, presented to the HCA by the County of Santa Cruz, Department of Public Works, January 3, 2005