

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

Project Progress Report

February 2005

Overview of the PA/ED Schedule

As reported to the Commission over the past six months, the project's schedule needed to be adjusted recently and completion of the PA/ED is now expected in February 2008. The project schedule has been impacted by the delay in securing the completed AMBAG Travel Forecast Model. The original project schedule, developed with AMBAG's input, had assumed availability of the Travel Model in November 2003. The 12 month delay in delivery of the model has resulted in a 9 month delay to the overall project schedule, with the project end date moved from May 2007 to February 2008.

Eighteen months into the expected 4 ½ year PA/ED process, the project is about 30 % complete. To date, the consultant effort has focused on completing basic surveying and topographic mapping, and preliminary environmental review to identify and qualify resources that could be affected by the project under various design scenarios. Other activities have included: the public outreach efforts associated with the project scoping activities, extensive freeway, ramp and arterial traffic counts in preparation of the *Existing Conditions Report*, preparation of the *Historic Resource Evaluation Report*, *Archaeological Survey Report*, *Wetlands Delineation Report*, and on-going Project Development Team meetings and project coordination efforts.

The selection of project alternatives by the RTC last month marks the beginning of the next major work effort. The initial environmental work is critical. Identified resources and habitat areas will be plotted on topographic maps and analyzed by environmental planners and engineers in a combined effort to decrease impacts that will ultimately have to be negotiated through respective resource agencies. Project design details will also be influenced by analysis of travel demand model and detailed traffic studies of the intersections of the freeway ramps and arterial street system. This work will begin in earnest upon Caltrans approval of the project alternatives and will extend through the summer of 2006, when much of the analysis will be completed.

The third and final phase consists of completing reports for submittal to responsible agencies, and compilation of the draft environmental document for public review and comment. Given the current levels of state and federal agency staff resources, this phase may take more time, but is currently scheduled for completion in February 2008. The project consultant is confident some of the delay in the project schedule can be overcome in the future.

As reported to the RTC at your last meeting, the project consultant had not yet been able to access the AMBAG travel model due to unresolved issues related to AMBAG's model

use agreement and securing the requisite security deposit for AMBAG. The security deposit and model use agreement issues have now been worked out. At this juncture, the consultants and AMBAG are discussing whether the full complement of model components needed by the consultants will be ready soon.

There has been an ongoing administrative effort to continually update the project work program and schedule. Various work elements that could have progressed in parallel may now have to be performed sequentially, which ultimately affects the efficiency of the planning/design process. An assessment of the potential impact to the project budget will be conducted once the complete travel model is in hand.

Changes in the Original Project Scope

As previously reported to the RTC in written status reports, other unexpected developments encountered in the project to date include:

- *out of date Right-of-Way survey monuments in the Aptos area;
- *addition of a Right-of-Way sub-consultant to secure the “permits to enter” for subsurface investigation of potential cultural resources;
- *addition of a cultural resources expert to address Native American issues associated with the subsurface excavation; and,
- *additional planning efforts to identify the best locations for the proposed pedestrian/bicycle crossings along the corridor.

The project consultant and staff have effectively resolved these issues at the administrative level and resolutions have not affected the project schedule. These items have, however, affected the contingency balance within the contract budget.

As part of the original consultant agreement, \$59,230 of the \$6.525 million contract (less than 1 percent) was designated as contingency within the contract budget. Collectively, the activities above have required use of nearly \$40,000 of the contract contingency, authorized through Contract Amendment No. 1. The balance of the contract contingency is currently \$19, 262. Clearly, this is a very small amount for a multi-million dollar contract.

Pending review of the completed AMBAG Travel Model and Caltrans approval of the project alternatives by the end of February 2005, there are no other delays on the horizon.