

AGENDA: April 7, 2005

TO: Regional Transportation Commission/Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

FROM: Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner

RE: SAFE Call Box Program – Contract for Freeway Service Patrol Program on Highway 1

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission serving as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) approve the attached resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Ladd's Autobody and Towing for Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) service on Highway 1.

BACKGROUND

As the SAFE, SCCRTC operates the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program in Santa Cruz County. This program consists of two tow trucks patrolling Highway 1 from Highway 9 to State Park Drive and Highway 17 from Granite Creek Road to the Santa Clara County Line. Both highway segments are patrolled during weekday commute periods (6:00 am to 9:00 am and 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm). The Highway 17 segment is also patrolled on Sundays from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm all year round and Saturdays from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm during the spring and summer tourist periods. Disabled vehicles increase non recurrent congestion on urban freeways and increase auto emissions related to congestion during peak commute periods. The FSP program is designed to reduce congestion, improve safety, and reduce fuel consumption and auto emissions by minimizing the congestion associated with collisions and other incidents. FSP tow truck drivers are trained and supervised by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and assist stranded motorists, clear collisions and remove debris from the roadway to keep traffic moving. The services offered by the FSP are free to the motorists.

DISCUSSION

Since 1994, under a joint powers agreement with the SCCRTC Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) SAFE, which administers the San Francisco Bay Area FSP program, has helped administer Santa Cruz County's FSP program. MTC SAFE has been responsible for developing, advertising and awarding the FSP contracts for Santa Cruz County highways, using MTC SAFE's standard contract process for competitively bid contracts. Beginning in 2005, Santa Cruz County SAFE will assume responsibility for most of the FSP program administrative tasks including awarding contracts and receiving FSP monthly statistics from Caltrans. Correspondingly, Santa Cruz County CHP will assume inspection and supervision for local beats. However, SCCRTC SAFE will continue to do a joint RFP process with the MTC SAFE for future tow service contracts.

The tow service contract for the FSP program Highway 1, Beat 24, is up for renewal. The awarded contract will cover the time period from June 2005 to June 2008. As agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding with MTC, the RFP for Beat 24 was included in the procurement process with other San Francisco Bay Area Beats up for renewal.

Award of Contract

SCCRTC SAFE recommends awarding the Beat 24 contract for June 2005-June 2008 to Ladd's Autobody and Towing, the only responder to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Highway 1. Ladd's Towing has provided FSP towing services on Highway 1 since July 1999 and is currently the towing service operator for the FSP program on Highway 17, Beat 17. Ladd's Towing is staffed with three certified FSP drivers and the FSP truck is stored on May Ave in Santa Cruz, very close to Beat 24. Ladd's Towing is a Felton based company that currently holds contracts with FSP, Rotation Towing through the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's office, California State Automotive Association, Cross County Motor club, Geico Insurance and Coach Net. Ladd's Towing has a good FSP record on both Highway 1 and Highway 17 and provided a competitive bid in response to the RFP.

Ladd Towing's price proposal is above average compared to the average cost per hour per truck of the San Francisco Bay Area Beat 2005 price proposals. One explanation for Ladd's Towing higher average cost is that Beat 24 employs only 1 truck while other San Francisco Bay Area Beats employ 2 or 3 trucks and can take some advantage of economies of scale. In addition, as a result of limited accessibility for warranty service in the area, the type of tow vehicles employed by Ladd's Towing are more substantial and require a lower mile per gallon ratio. The proposed cost per hour per truck is \$65.25 for 4,506 total contract hours during 36 month period. This is a 12% increase from the 2002 Beat 24 contracted price for Ladd's Autobody and Towing. The cost increase can primarily be attributed to the increase cost of diesel fuel which can account for up to 8% according to the American Petroleum Institute. The total contract amount is expected to be \$308,718. This cost for Beat 24 through June 2008 includes a 5% contingency for overtime, special event service, or special requests from CHP. This is budgeted...not budgeted...

Funding

There are adequate funds in the Commission's budget for this contract. The SCCRTC SAFE FSP program is funded through a combination of Caltrans, SAFE funds and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds. In FY 03-04 and FY 04-05, SCCRTC programmed SAFE fund reserves as the required twenty five percent local match to Caltrans funds and a variable overmatch to fund current FSP services. Since FY 2000, SCCRTC has matched Caltrans funds by an average of sixty percent each year. However, STIP funds have not been allocated for 2 years and may not be available for this program in FY 05-06. So far the SCCRTC has been able to back fill STIP funding shortages with SAFE Reserve funds. However, this practice cannot be continued indefinitely. If revenues do not meet program needs in the future staff will bring recommendations to the Commission including possibly reducing FSP hours. The proposed contract for Beat 24 will allow for modification of service hours with 30 days notice.

Staff continues to recommend completely funding the FSP program as it provides one of the highest cost-benefit ratios of any transportation program. The cost-benefit ratio considers response time, incident delays and delay savings which reflect the level of congestion relief provided by the FSP

service. Investment in the FSP program is essential for providing congestion relief during a time of reduced transportation budgets and few capital projects.

SUMMARY

As the regional SAFE, SCCRTC operates the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program in Santa Cruz County. The FSP program has one of the highest cost-benefit ratios for reducing congestion. The FSP program on Highway 1, Beat 24, contract is up for renewal. Staff recommends that the RTC award the FSP program on Highway 1, Beat 24, to Ladd's Autobody and Towing for the time period from June 2005-June 2008. Ladd's Towing currently operates the FSP program Highway 17, Beat 17.

Attachment 1: Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Negotiate and Enter into a Contract for Freeway Service Patrol Services on Highway 1.

Prepared by: Grace Blakeslee

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