

Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Merge Lanes Project Santa Cruz County

Project Information Sheet

January 2005

Project Description

- The project will construct auxiliary lanes southbound and northbound between the Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard Interchanges thereby reducing the merging and weaving conflicts on the mainline freeway beyond the southern end of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project (see attached map).
- The La Fonda Avenue overcrossing will be rebuilt to accommodate the construction of the auxiliary lanes and the future widening of Highway 1 for HOV lanes. The overcrossing will be improved to provide wider sidewalks and bike lanes.
- The auxiliary lanes will include construction of shoulders for disabled vehicles and California Highway Patrol enforcement activities and infrastructure for Intelligent Transportation System elements, consistent with those for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project and the future Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project.
- Environmental review is funded and will be completed by the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project environmental review consultants. Environmental review for this project is expected to take nine months.
- The estimated cost for final design, construction and project development is \$12.3 million. The project could be constructed in two phases, if necessary:
 - Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Southbound Merge Lane, with reconstruction of the La Fonda Overcrossing - \$8.4 million
 - Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Northbound Merge Lane - \$3.9 million

Project Benefits

- This project is the next logical step between the funded Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project and the planned Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project. It is a separate, stand-alone project that would complement, but not delay or otherwise jeopardize progress on construction of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project, planning for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lanes Project, or potential future ramp meters in the corridor.
- Caltrans traffic studies show that this relatively small project will significantly ease traffic flow on Highway 1.

- This segment between the Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard interchanges is the busiest segment of Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County.
- Construction of the southbound auxiliary lane will reduce traffic delay 266,000 hours of delay per year; and, construction of the northbound auxiliary lane will reduce traffic delay 315,000 hours per day.
- Currently peak hour travel demand exceeds the carrying capacity of the highway. This segment of Highway 1 for multiple hours each day is rated as an “F,” the worst rating given using the standard transportation measurement of “Level of Service” (LOS). Typically, mid-week southbound evening congestion lasts for over 4 hours.
- The rebuilt La Fonda overcrossing will provide improved bike and pedestrian access between two schools, Harbor High School and De Laveaga Elementary School, and the residential neighborhoods on the opposite sides of the freeway.
- The Intelligent Transportation System elements will help Caltrans transmit real time information about traffic conditions and accidents to the California Highway Patrol and the motoring public.
- The reduction in weaving and merging conflicts through the project area is expected to provide safety benefits in the immediate area and improve traffic flow for commuter, commercial, and recreational traffic in the entire corridor.
- The merge lanes will improve mobility for emergency vehicles and access to/from Dominican Hospital.