

TO: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner
REGARDING: Information on Highway 1/Salinas Interchange Project

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review the attached materials on plans for the Highway 1/Salinas Interchange Project; and
 2. Direct staff to write a letter to the Transportation Agency for Monterey (TAMC) and Caltrans supporting safety improvements to the Highway 1/Salinas Interchange and requesting that TAMC keep the RTC informed of project developments.
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BACKGROUND

The Transportation Agency for Monterey (TAMC) in partnership with Caltrans, has been considering safety improvements on Highway 1 at Salinas Road and operational improvements to the Highway between Jensen Road and the Trafton undercrossing in Monterey.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Highway 1/Salinas Interchange Project will construct a new interchange at Salinas Road and Highway 1 north of Moss Landing near the Santa Cruz County line. The new interchange will include construction of a 3 or 4 lane structure (Salinas Road) over Highway 1 with 3 diamond-type ramps and one southbound loop off-ramp, possibly including a stop light. A frontage road will be constructed from Jensen Road to Salinas Road west of Highway 1. A frontage road will also be constructed east of Highway 1 to provide access to local businesses. Three build alternatives and a no-build alternative are under consideration. The build alternatives (Attachment 1) are as follows:

- Alternative 1: Compact Diamond Interchange;
- Alternative 5: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop Off-ramp; and
- Alternative 7: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop On-ramp.

Staff recommends that the Commission review the attached materials on plans for the Highway 1/Salinas Interchange Project.

This project is located just south of the Santa Cruz County border and connects to Santa Cruz County's primary transportation corridor. Although Commission staff has not been involved in planning for this project, staff agrees that there are safety issues at this intersection. **Staff recommends that the Commission direct staff to write a letter to TAMC and Caltrans supporting safety improvements at this intersection and requesting that TAMC continue to keep the RTC informed of project updates.**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration have prepared an Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment. This study examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project. A "Public Notice of Availability and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration" and Public Hearing Announcement is attached (Attachment 2). The Public Hearing will be held July 28th, 2005 in Watsonville. Commission staff is reviewing this document and will provide comments on the Initial Study, where appropriate, to Caltrans. Comments are due to Caltrans by August 12th. If the Commission as a whole or individual Commissioners have comments on this project, please provide comments to staff by August 9th.

SUMMARY

TAMC in partnership with Caltrans is proposing the Highway 1/Salinas Road interchange project. This project is located close to the Santa Cruz County's southern border. The Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment is available for review. A Public Hearing is scheduled in Watsonville on July 28th, 2005.

Attachments:

1. Highway 1/ Salinas Road Interchange Fact Sheet and Build Alternatives
2. Public Notice of Availability and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration/Public Hearing Announcement
3. Letter from TAMC Regarding Support for Highway 1 at Salinas Road Interchange Project