

MEMORANDUM

TO: SCCRTC **DATE:** July 12, 2005

FROM: Nolte Associates, Inc. **PROJ #:** Route 1 HOV Lane
Widening (SJ0086001)

SUBJECT: Commission Status Report for Period:
March 2005 through June 2005

- 1) Project Status Update
 - a) Environmental
 - i) Cultural Resources
 - ii) Biological / Wetland Resources
 - (1) California Red-legged Frog
 - (2) Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander
 - (3) Other Special-status Species
 - iii) Noise
 - iv) Socio-economic Studies
 - v) Schedule for Environmental Document
 - b) Engineering
 - i) Geometric Development
 - ii) Traffic Modeling / Analysis
 - iii) Independent Utility projects
 - iv) Hydrology/Hydraulics
 - v) Geotechnical Memorandums
 - c) Public Outreach
 - i) Newsletters
- 2) Schedule
- 3) Next Update -

1. PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (for Work Completed December '04 through February '05)

- i) Cultural Resources – Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act
 - a. Architectural – Historic Resource Evaluation Report (HRER) was submitted to Caltrans for review. Caltrans comments were received in November, 2004. Area of Potential Effects (APE) maps and report were updated and the revised report is in Caltrans hands.
 - b. Archaeological: Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) was prepared pending subsurface explorations at six sites, three within Caltrans right-of-way, three on private property. Permits to Enter are being pursued for the three private properties.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and FHWA procedures prevent invasive work in areas that would not be affected for the project. Given that the project alternatives would affect different locations, Caltrans and Team met July 7 to develop a consistent strategy for moving forward.

Caltrans current direction is that subsurface work be done following identification of preferred alternative—between draft and final environmental documents; this may affect the project schedule. Confirmation is being sought from SHPO and FHWA.
- ii) Biological / Wetlands Resources
 - a. Wetland Report was submitted to Caltrans on February, 2005. Following revisions to Caltrans comments, wetlands delineation will be submitted to USACOE (Corps) to define jurisdictional limits.
 - b. Draft Location Hydraulics Study is being prepared to evaluate flood impacts of the alternatives.
 - c. Steelhead has been found in Aptos, Valencia and Soquel creeks.
 - d. CRLF Approach - California Red-Legged Frog presence is inferred due to sightings within a couple of miles of the project site and high quality habitat in the project vicinity. Mitigation for any impacts will be required through consultations with resource agencies.
 - e. SCLTS Approach – FHWA has approved inferring presence of Santa Cruz Long-toed Salamander in Valencia Lagoon and vicinity. Mitigation for any impacts will be required through consultations with resource agencies.
 - f. All biological / wetlands resource issues have been delineated on CADD for engineers' use in developing the alternatives.
- iii) (Unchanged)Noise measurements have been initiated and are 90% complete. The formal work plan was submitted to and approved by Caltrans. (Summer '04)
- iv) (Unchanged)The team has completed gathering land use, socioeconomic, neighborhood, and community facilities information for corridor communities, including General Plan, Specific Plan and other relevant planning documents from Santa Cruz County and local communities. Data have been analyzed and tabulated and Affected Environment (setting) portion completed; report has been tabled pending completion of engineering for impacts assessment. (Fall '04)

b. Engineering

- i) a.) Geometric Development – The Nolte/HNTB team has begun to develop the Alternatives approved in January, 2005. The focus for Alternatives development thus far has been:
 - Ramp Metering and Auxiliary Lane

- HOV Lane Widening with Standard Shoulders (following Caltrans PSR Geometry)
- Diamond Interchange Configurations at Morrissey and Soquel.

These alternatives have been provided to Caltrans and RTC for review and comment.

b.) UPRR Crossings - We have met with the UPRR and the users of the line to better understand the need and impact of closing the line for construction. These optional methods for reconstructing the structures are being developed:

- Replace in same alignment using short-term structures.
- Replace in same alignment using temporary “shoofly” (railroad detour).
- Investigate the possibility of a new alignment for the UPRR that would avoid these crossings altogether.

ii) Traffic Modeling Analysis

- a. Traffic Model – AMBAG model has been received by consultant team. Collaboration between RTC, AMBAG, Caltrans and the Consultants, Nolte and Wilbur Smith, has resulted in a memorandum that describes the technical approach to be followed for the analysis. Initial efforts are focused on verifying model output, AMBAG vs. Consultant, validating that output, and creating a future year base case (no-build).
- b. Existing Conditions Report – Existing Conditions Final Report has been submitted to Caltrans for final approval.

iii) Independent Utility Projects

- a. Auxiliary Lane Project - The House version of the TEA-21 reauthorization bill which includes \$3.67 million in earmark funds for the Soquel to Morrissey auxiliary lane project has been approved. Funding for the remainder will come from other sources. The total cost is estimated at \$12.3M. The team is in process of developing the geometry for the Auxiliary Lane project for Caltrans review. It is anticipated that the Environmental Process will be a CE.
- b. Bike / Pedestrian Crossings – Two meetings with bicycle and pedestrian stakeholder groups were held in May and input was received on pedestrian patterns and demands were thoroughly discussed. As a result of the stakeholder meetings and subsequent meetings with local agencies, recommendations for preferred crossing locations have been summarized in a report prepared by the consultant team for review by the RTC staff.

iv) Hydraulics

- a. The Team is developing the Location Hydraulic Report. Part of this effort involves identifying all hydraulic crossings, wetland locations and flood plain locations. This information has been compiled in one set of drawings that will become part of the Report. The Report cannot be completed until the ED selects the preferred Alternative.

v) Geotechnical Memorandums

- a. The team has compiled Geotechnical Memorandums for all the Structures in the corridor. Each Memorandum will discuss the soil conditions at that specific location, the water table and a likely foundation type for a new structure. In addition, existing structure types are discussed. This will assist in determining the level of impacts that will result from each structure modification or replacement.

c. Public Outreach Activities

- i. Consultant CirclePoint, (formerly Public Affairs Management), is currently working closely with the RTC and the Team to prepare a newsletter updating the public on the status of the project development process.
- ii. CirclePoint has also provided a comprehensive set of recommended updates to the project website information. The RTC is incorporating these recommendations.
- iii. Bike/Ped Meetings: More than 25 interest group representatives were invited to participate in the the Bike/Ped Crossing meetings – see above for further details on these meetings.
- iv. A series of Community Workshops is being planned to update the community on the project's progress and receive input on issues to consider in anticipation of the preparation of the formal draft environmental document. These workshops are expected to occur late this year or early 2006.

2. SCHEDULE

The following are some major milestones per the current schedule. The following schedule has slipped approximately 3 months since the last update. The traffic analysis and subsurface exploration continue to be the most critical

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| ➤ Archaeological Subsurface Work | April '05 |
| ➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis | Feb '05 – Jan '06 |
| ➤ Admin Draft EA/EIR | April '07 |
| ➤ Public Circulation | Oct '07 |
| ➤ Final EA/EIR submittal to FHWA | July '07 |
| ➤ FHWA ROD | Feb/March '08 |

3. NEXT UPDATE:

RTC Update planned in November, 2005.