

AGENDA: November 3, 2005

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner

REGARDING: Highway 1 Projects

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission accept a Quarterly Progress Report from the consultant on the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project, and receive a Status Report on other activities related to the Highway 1 project;

BACKGROUND

The RTC initiated work on the current phase of the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project in June 2003. The Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA), created in February 2004 to manage the implementation of the Highway 1 Project, decided in January 2005 that the RTC should retain management of the Project. The HCA continues to meet on a quarterly basis, staffed by the County Public Works Agency. In March 2005, Caltrans approved a list of alternatives for development through the preliminary design/environmental review phase of the project referred to as Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase.

The Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project is managed by Caltrans District-5. The environmental document for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project was approved in August 2002 and the final design of the project is nearing completion. The start of construction is subject to the availability of state transportation funds.

Thanks to Congressman Farr, the House version of the transportation reauthorization bill, now in Congressional Conference Committee, includes \$3.67 million for the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project.

DISCUSSION

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

As announced last month, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) on September 29th, authorized an allocation of \$40 million in the State Transportation

Improvement Program (STIP) for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project. Concurrent with this action the CTC also amended the 2004 STIP to list \$1.5 million for landscaping as a separate project. The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) will be amended to reflect this change at a future RTC meeting.

It is standard policy to list landscaping as a separate project as typically landscape contracts include a "plant establishment" period of 3 years beyond the time the landscaping is initially planted to ensure plant survival. Prolonging the bonding period of the main project would limit the construction contractor's bonding capacity to bid/build other projects during the 3 year plant establishment period of the landscape contractor, hence separate contracts are appropriate. Note that there will be some landscaping for erosion control, and environmental mitigation as part of the main project.

Caltrans will provide an oral report on the project schedule for advertising the construction contract and start of construction at the meeting.

Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project

Public Meeting on November 17th

As directed at the September RTC meeting, staff of Caltrans, RTC and the Highway 1 consultant are preparing to hold an Open House/Project Information meeting and RTC Public Hearing on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project in the Board of Supervisor's Chambers on the evening of November 17th. Arrangements have been made with Community TV to broadcast the Public Hearing.

Commissioners are invited to attend the Open House/Project Information meeting beginning at 6:00 pm, where members of the public will have an opportunity to meet with Caltrans and the Highway 1 consultant staff on a one-on-one basis an hour before the formal RTC Public Hearing begins.

The RTC Public Hearing will begin at 7:15 p.m. with a presentation of the project features by the Highway 1 consultants and Caltrans, followed by an opportunity for the RTC and members of the public to provide comments. All comments provided by the RTC or the public will be considered by the Project Development Team in preparation of the project's environmental document, and subsequent staff recommendations regarding project planning and programming issues.

Project Development and Funding

The Highway 1 consultant team has submitted an administrative draft Supplemental Project Study Report (PSR) for the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project. This document will focus on updated information on the auxiliary lane project previously included in the larger PSR for Operational Improvements on Highway 1 between State Park Drive and Morrissey Boulevard, approved in September 2002. The information in

the Supplemental PSR will be used to secure Caltrans project development support and programming the cost, scope, and project development schedule in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program/State Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP/STIP).

In the meantime, Caltrans District 5 staff has prepared a project nomination form to secure state-controlled Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds for this project as a partnership effort with federal, state and local participation. Caltrans has proposed funding participation level in the amount of 25 percent of the total estimated cost of \$11.3 million for final design and construction phases of the project. Caltrans action was taken in recognition of the RTC decision to consider programming a portion of the RTC's share of RTIP funds to the Highway 1 Soquel-Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project and overall merits of the projects.

In December the RTC will review the draft RTIP in preparation of approving the final RTIP at a Public Hearing in January/February timeframe.

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

Project Schedule and Budget

As reported at the last Quarterly Progress Meeting, direction received from Caltrans, per State Historic Office of Preservation (SHPO) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to delay subsurface archaeological work until after identification of the preferred alternative will have a significant impact on the project schedule. The Project Development Team is still reviewing the overall magnitude of the project delay and potential impact to project costs for the PA/ED phase.

Staff and the Highway 1 Project Consultants are also negotiating the scope and costs of completing the PA/ED phase for the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project as an Independent Utility project, separate from the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project. Processing the project as an Independent Utility project will allow earlier delivery of the project than the current schedule for the Highway 1 project. However, the environmental review process is potentially greater than initially assumed in the scope of services for the Highway 1 project. Caltrans staff is currently reviewing the draft Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report for the Auxiliary Lane project to determine the appropriate level of environmental review in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Staff and the Highway 1 consultant team will discuss these items as part of the upcoming Quarterly Progress Report to the RTC in November.

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The next scheduled meeting of the HCA is November 4, 2005, at 8:30 a.m. in the County Administrative Building.

SUMMARY

Updates on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project, the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Widening Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) process, the Highway 1 Morrissey Boulevard Interchange, and the Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA) are included in this staff report. As directed by the RTC, staff is preparing for an Open House/Project Information meeting and RTC Public Hearing on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project the evening of November 17th, beginning at 6:00 pm at the County Board of Supervisor's Chambers.