

MEMORANDUM

TO: SCCRTC **DATE:** October 13, 2005

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

SUBJECT: Commission Status Report for Period:
July 2005 through October 2005

- 1) Project Status Update
 - a) Environmental
 - i) Cultural Resources
 - ii) Biological / Wetland Resources
 - iii) Noise
 - iv) Socio-economic Studies
 - v) Schedule for Environmental Document
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1. PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (for Work Completed July '04 through October '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. Area of Potential Effects (APE) maps and report were updated and the revised report is in Caltrans hands.
 - b. Archaeological: Draft Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) is prepared pending subsurface explorations.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and FHWA procedures prevent invasive work in areas that would not be affected for the project. Current direction is for subsurface work to be performed following identification of preferred alternative—likely between draft and final environmental documents; this has significant affect the project schedule.
 - ii) Biological / Wetlands Resources
 - a. Draft Wetland Report was submitted to Caltrans on February, 2005. Comments have been received and noted. Next efforts are dependent on finalizing alternatives/impacts.
 - b. Draft Location Hydraulics Study has been prepared to evaluate flood impacts of the alternatives. Final report will reflect alternatives.
 - c. [unchanged] Steelhead has been found in Aptos, Valencia and Soquel creeks.
 - d. [unchanged] 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. [unchanged] 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. [unchanged] 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 developed four of the Alternatives discussed in January, 2005. These Alternatives, currently under review for impacts are:
 - Ramp Metering and Auxiliary Lane (RMAX)
 - HOV Lane Widening with Standard Shoulders (following Caltrans PSR Geometry)
 - Diamond Interchange Configurations at Morrissey and Soquel.
 - Reduced Section/Reduced Standard Alternative

Caltrans and RTC have reviewed the first three of these Alternatives and will be reviewing the fourth alternative listed in the next month. In the reduced standard alternative we are looking for opportunities to reduce impacts (cost, environmental, right of way) of the construction by reducing the design footprint. The type of design features that will be considered with this Alternative are:

- Reduced median width
- Reduced shoulders
- Minimizing changes to existing substandard ramp geometry
- Reducing merge lengths
- Converting interchange types to those with smaller footprints
- Constructing retaining walls to avoid environmental or right of way impacts

b.) UPRR Crossings - We have met with the UPRR a third time and presented the design of three options to replace the existing structures. They are:

- Utilizing a “shoo-fly” alignment (temporary detour) for replacement of structures
- Utilizing a new alignment for replacement of the structures
- Replace structure in same alignment using construction methods that have minor disruption to the operations – sometimes referred to as “top-down” construction. This option requires some trucking of materials and has some cost implications, but minimizes other impacts (environmental and right of way).

UPRR appears supportive of all methods, but at this point seems to prefer the “Top Down” method because there is no shoo-fly and not much disruption. Next action will be to formally submit plans for UPRR review and formal comment.

v) Traffic Modeling Analysis

a. Traffic Model – Collaboration between RTC, AMBAG, Caltrans and the Consultant team (Nolte and Wilbur Smith) continues. This subset of the PDT group is having monthly conference call meetings on the operations analysis. Specific milestones/decisions reached and/or being implemented:

- Freeway operations calibration is nearing completion
- No Build Alternative Definition has been agreed upon (includes merge lanes and Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes)
- Horizon year has been changed to 2035
- Transit Market Analysis should be initiated within the next month (pending volumes from demand model)

vi) Independent Utility Projects

- a. Auxiliary Lane Project from Soquel to Morrissey – A Draft Supplemental PSR has been prepared and submitted to Caltrans in September, 2005. Three Alternatives were included – two alternatives for adding the aux lane plus the no-build alternative.
- b. Bike / Pedestrian Crossings – The Pedestrian/Bike Crossings investigation resulted in a memorandum summarizing the recommended locations for these crossings. Further design of these crossings is moving in parallel with the alternatives development.

vii) Hydraulics

- a. [Unchanged] The Team has developed a 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 are part of the Report. The Report cannot be completed until the ED selects the preferred Alternative. Work for now is on hold.

viii) Geotechnical Memorandums

- a. [Unchanged] 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. CirclePoint (formerly Public Affairs Management), is currently working closely with the RTC and Caltrans to prepare information for a November Open House/Public Meeting on the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes. This meeting will also have some brief information on the "HOV" project.
- ii. A series of Community Workshops is being planned to update the community on the HOV project's progress and receive input on issues to consider in anticipation of the preparation of the draft environmental document. These workshops are now expected to occur in late winter or early spring, 2006.

2. SCHEDULE / BUDGET

The following are some major milestones per the current schedule. The following schedule has slipped significantly since the last update. The traffic analysis and subsurface exploration are now both on the critical path, with each item causing roughly a one year delay. Therefore, the original anticipated completion of summer, 2007, is now scheduled for fall, 2009. However, as the preferred alternative is anticipated to be determined prior to the summer of June, 2007, should funds become available, design could begin late 2007, allowing portions of the construction to begin soon after the environmental document is complete. Overall phasing/development schemes will be developed over the coming year.

➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis	Aug '05 – March '06
➤ Admin Draft EA/EIR	July '06
➤ Public Circulation	Spring, '07
➤ Select Preferred Alternative	June, '07
➤ Archaeological Subsurface Work	July, '07
➤ SHPO concurrence	Spring, '09
➤ Final EA/EIR submittal to FHWA	July '09
➤ FHWA ROD	Fall '09

With the significant changes to the schedule, a review of the budget is currently underway.

3. NEXT UPDATE:

RTC Update planned in February, 2006.