

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner

REGARDING: Caltrans Open House – State Route (Highway) 17 Glenwood
Curves Safety Project

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Regional Transportation Commission accept this information item on an Open House proposed for the State Route (Highway) 17 Glenwood Curves Safety Project scheduled for January 17, 2006 beginning at 5:00 pm at the Scotts Valley High School.

BACKGROUND

Caltrans maintains the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) for the purpose of preserving and protecting the state highway system. Projects programmed with the SHOPP include collision reduction (safety), bridge and roadway preservation, mobility and facilities related to the state highway system. The 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) provided \$5.5 billion for SHOPP projects statewide over the four-year period 2004/05 through 2007/08. Currently there are 11 SHOPP projects on Highway 17 within Santa Cruz County designed to improve motorist safety, rehabilitate and preserve the roadway, and improve mobility.

DISCUSSION

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing a safety project on Highway 17 approximately 10 miles north of the Highway 1/17 Interchange at a point ½ mile south of Glenwood Drive and extending 1 mile northward. The purpose of this project is to reduce the number of collisions that occur at this location, especially during wet weather conditions. The work includes widening the outside shoulders by 8 feet adjacent to the hillside in the southbound direction, constructing four retaining walls ranging in height of 8 to 12 feet, replacing the existing median barrier and installing new drainage systems.

The estimated project cost is \$7.23 million with construction scheduled to begin in Spring 2007. A moveable barrier will be installed in the median and two lanes maintained in the peak period direction during peak commuter periods. At other times, traffic will be reduced to one lane to allow construction activity to proceed.

SHOPP Funding

This project was included in the 2004 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), a document produced by Caltrans and approved by the California Transportation

Commission (CTC). The SHOPP includes safety and operational improvements on the state highway system. Regional agencies such as ours have a limited role in providing input on the priority, timing or funding of SHOPP projects.

The funding for this \$7.23 million project and other SHOPP projects comes off the top of the STIP Fund Estimate. After calculating what state and federal funds are needed for SHOPP projects, Caltrans staff and state highway maintenance activities, and the Local Assistance Program (which includes Regional Surface Transportation Program-RSTP and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program-CMAQ), what is left over is given to the STIP. The CTC divides STIP funds between Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) projects chosen by Caltrans Headquarters (25% of the balance) and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) projects chosen by the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, such as the SCCRTC (75% of the balance). The STIP program is discussed in detail in the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*.

Environmental Review

Caltrans has announced the availability of a Draft Initial Study with a Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for public review (see [Attachment 1](#)). A copy of the environmental document is available at RTC offices, the Central Library on Church Street in Santa Cruz, and at the Scotts Valley Library. Comments on the environmental document are due to Caltrans on February 1, 2006. For more information contact Lisa Johnson, Caltrans Environmental Planner, at (805) 542-4759, via email at: Lisa.Johnson@dot.ca.gov.

Caltrans is holding an Open House on Tuesday, January 17, 2006, at the Scotts Valley High School located at 555 Glenwood Drive. The Open House is scheduled from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a brief presentation at 6:00 p.m.

SUMMARY

Caltrans and the FHWA are proposing a safety project on Highway 17 approximately 10 miles north of the Highway 1/17 Interchange at a point ½ mile south of Glenwood Drive and extending 1 mile northward. The purpose of this project is to reduce the number of collisions that occur at this location, especially during wet weather conditions. The work includes widening the outside shoulders, constructing four retaining walls, replacing the existing median barrier and installing new drainage systems. The proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is now available for public review.

Caltrans is holding an Open House for the project on Tuesday, January 17, 2006, at the Scotts Valley High School located at 555 Glenwood Drive, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with a brief presentation at 6:00 p.m.

Attachment:

1. Public Notice - Availability of an Environmental Document and Public Meeting for the Route 17 Glenwood Curves Safety Project