

AGENDA: November 2, 2006

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner

REGARDING: Highway 1 Project Status Update and Contract for the  
Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project

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### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve the attached resolution (Attachment 4) authorizing the Executive Director to complete negotiations and execute a sole source consultant contract, with Nolte Associates, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$999,000 to complete the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project; and,
  2. Receive a status update on Highway 1 Project Activities.
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### ***BACKGROUND***

In June 2006, the RTC amended the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to transfer \$200,000 in Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds from the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project to the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project. These funds are intended to match a portion of the federal earmark secured by Congressman Farr in the Federal Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU, to provide a total of \$1 million for work to begin on the Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase of the Auxiliary Lanes Project. Last month, the RTC authorized the Executive Director to execute a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans setting forth the roles and responsibilities between Caltrans and the RTC to complete the PA/ED process.

### ***DISCUSSION***

#### **Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project**

Caltrans and RTC staff have been working with the consultant team in development of a proposed scope of services and cost estimate (Attachments 1 and 2, respectively) to complete the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. As previously discussed, staff proposes, with concurrence from Caltrans (Attachment 3), to award a sole source contract with the consultant team lead by Nolte Associates, working on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. This approach will maximize use of environmental data and engineering design work already completed to advance the Auxiliary Lane project through the conceptual

design phase as well as coordination with the Highway 1 HOV Lane project and the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project currently under construction.

### Scope of Services

The attached Scope of Services (Attachment 1) identifies the professional services necessary to complete the Caltrans PA/ED process for the addition of auxiliary lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions of Highway 1 between Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard, including replacement of the La Fonda Avenue overcrossing. The Table of Contents in the scope of services (page i and ii in Attachment 1) provides a list of the major tasks and sub-tasks involved in this work effort, including: project management, engineering, preliminary engineering and traffic analysis, preparation and circulation of the draft environmental document, and completion of the final project documents.

It is estimated that this effort will be completed within twenty-four (24) months from the Notice to Proceed. The work will be performed in parallel and coordinated with the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project to minimize potential costs. Final design and construction are not included in the current work program. These activities are dependent on securing additional funds not currently programmed in the STIP or the RTC budget.

While this work is conducted in parallel with the HOV Lane Project, a separate Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) will be prepared for the Auxiliary Lanes Project. It is anticipated that the Auxiliary Lanes Project will be cleared with a Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact; separate and apart from the environmental documentation necessary for the HOV Lanes Project.

The public involvement effort is identified in Task 10 and includes creation of a project fact sheet for distribution to the public and preparation for a public hearing on the draft environmental document, including preparation of a power point presentation and display boards. The scope also includes up to 4 key milestone presentations to the RTC Board through the course of the project focusing on the Auxiliary Lanes Project. In the event additional meetings or activities beyond those included in the draft scope are desired, those services will be provided as additions to the contract.

### Milestone Schedule

The final page of the scope of services (page 25 of Attachment 1) provides a Milestone Schedule for the work program. All major work items are set to begin upon the RTC issuing a Notice to Proceed in November. An administrative draft of the environmental document will be prepared and reviewed by all responsible agencies in the Fall of 2007, prior to circulation of the draft environmental document in the Spring of 2008. Selection of the preferred alternative is targeted for June 2008. Immediately following selection of the preferred alternative, work could begin on the final engineering plans, subject to the availability of funds.

Little or no right-of-way is expected to be needed to accommodate this project however, construction easements may be necessary for reconstruction of the La Fonda Avenue Bridge.

RTC staff have initiated discussions with Caltrans to perform all necessary right-of-way certification duties on this project as well as the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. Staff will report back on this matter in the near future.

### Schedule of Fees

The total estimated cost of consultant services to complete the PA/ED phase of the Auxiliary Lanes project is \$999,000, as reported in the Schedule of Fees (Attachment 2). Nolte Associates, Inc., will serve as the lead consultant managing the PA/ED process and the work performed by 10 subconsultants. There is no contingency provided in the schedule of fees; therefore, staff and consultants will be extra attentive to the budget and potential cost minimizing measures to ensure that the project is delivered within the budget.

Parsons Transportation Group (Parsons) is responsible for coordinating all technical environmental studies and preparing the environmental documents for agency and public review, and final approval. In addition to managing the overall project effort, Nolte Associates manages the engineering studies including traffic analysis, geological and hydrological studies.

Work performed for the HOV Lanes project that is applicable to the Auxiliary Lanes project will be used for this effort, whether explicitly noted in the detailed task subsections or not. Considerable cost saving are being realized from the work already performed on the HOV Lanes project and the working relationship developed between the consultant team, Caltrans and RTC staff.

Accordingly, **staff recommends that the RTC approve the attached resolution (Attachment 4) authorizing the Executive Director to complete negotiations and execute sole source consultant contract, with Nolte Associates, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$999,000 to complete the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project.**

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

The focus of attention on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project for the past several months has been the development of the geometric plans for the respective project build alternatives: the HOV Lane and Auxiliary Lanes/Ramp Metering alternatives. Based on results of the traffic operations analysis recommendations have been made as to the number of lanes on the highway on-ramps and off-ramps, and/or to identify where auxiliary lanes between freeway interchanges are warranted to extend the merging and weaving area on and off the highway to reduce congestion and improve operational safety.

Through this analysis the engineering plans that have been developed attempt to minimize impacts to the adjacent environment and minimize project construction costs by proposing exceptions to Caltrans's current design standards. Even the proposed "Standard" Geometry alternative includes select exceptions to current design standards to accommodate existing conditions (i.e. the distance between the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue Interchange and the Bay/Porter Avenue

Interchange). The Reduced Geometry alternative assumes additional design exceptions in areas that do not pose significant safety problems.

Caltrans traditionally requires that a fairly detailed engineering analysis be completed (characterized as the 35 percent level) for approval of design exceptions for each alternative under environmental analysis. To fit within the constrained budget allocated for the PA/ED phase, the scope of work was designed to avoid extensive engineering design on project alternatives not selected as the preferred design. Based on past experience of major projects in other localities, the level of design effort thought necessary for environmental review of the project alternatives was set at the 10 percent level in the consultant contract. Once a preferred alternative is selected the consultant will complete design work to the 35 percent level to receive formal approval of any design exceptions included in the preferred alternative.

The Project Development Team continues to work on identifying an acceptable method that will allow Caltrans to agree to potential design exceptions “in concept” based on engineering work at the 10 percent design level. Staff is hopeful that agreement can be reached on a method that will allow Caltrans to provide conditional approval of alternative design exceptions within the consultant’s budget and project schedule.

#### Open House Summary Report

As previously reported, staff was pleased with the level of community participation and comments received at the Open House meetings in September. A Summary Report of those meetings is being prepared and an executive summary of the comments received will be shared with the RTC in the near future.

#### Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Caltrans will provide a status report on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project.

#### Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met on Friday, October 6, 2006, and received a Quarterly Project Status Report from Chris Metzger, Nolte Associates Project Manager. The HCA authorized sending a letter to Will Kempton, Caltrans Director, Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5 Director, and the region’s state elected officials requesting \$8.4 million in state funding to address the funding shortfall to design and construct the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Projects. RTC staff is assisting HCA staff (County Public Works Agency staff) in the preparation of that letter. The next meeting of the HCA is tentatively scheduled for January 5, 2007, but may be changed due to the holiday schedule.

#### ***SUMMARY***

The Draft Scope of Services including a milestone schedule (Attachment 1) and Schedule of Fees (Attachment 2) is presented for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. RTC and Caltrans staff have discussed the recommendation to award a

sole source contract to Nolte Associates to conduct the PA/ED work (Attachment 3). RTC staff, with the concurrence of Caltrans, recommend that the RTC approve the attached resolution (Attachment 4) authorizing the Executive Director to complete negotiations and execute a sole source consultant contract, with Nolte Associates, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$999,000 to complete the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. A status report is provided on other activities related to Highway 1 projects.

Attachments:

1. Scope of Services for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project
2. Schedule of Fees for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes Project
3. Memorandum, Sole Source Consultant Services for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes project.
4. Resolution authorizing a consultant contract with Nolte Associates for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes Project