

AGENDA: December 7, 2006

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner
REGARDING: Highway 1 Project Status Update

RECOMMENDATIONS

This item is for information only.

DISCUSSION

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

In October, the RTC authorized the Executive Director to complete negotiations and execute a consultant contract with Nolte Associates, Inc., to proceed with the Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) process on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. Caltrans, RTC staff, and the consultant team have now agreed on the scope of services within the authorized contract amount of \$999,000.

During this period, RTC staff requested that the Caltrans' Office of External Audits perform a pre-award audit to review provisions of the consultant contract and the consultant's proposed costs in relation to actual historical costs and estimating procedures. This process is required of all consultant contracts on state highway projects with total costs over \$250,000.

Subject to positive findings of the pre-award audit, staff anticipates executing the consultant contract and issuing a Notice to Proceed in mid-December 2006.

As previously discussed, the PA/ED process is expected to take up to 2 years to complete. Work can begin on the final design of the project as soon as Caltrans has identified the preferred alternative, anticipated in June 2008.

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

The focus of attention over the past few months has been on the development of the geometric plans for the respective project build alternatives: the HOV Lane and Auxiliary Lanes/Ramp Metering alternatives. Through this process the engineers attempt to minimize impacts to the adjacent environment and minimize project construction costs by proposing exceptions to Caltrans' current design standards.

As previously discussed, 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. 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.

Staff is hopeful that progress has been made in establishing a dialog between the consultants and Caltrans' design engineers whereby the sensitivity of potential design exceptions can be gauged and attention focused on issue areas without incurring extensive engineering analysis on a broad level. Chris Metzger, Nolte Project Manager will provide a more detailed report as part of the Quarterly Progress Report at the January RTC meeting.

Contract Amendment

Staff and the consultant team have initiated discussion on necessary amendments to the consultant contract scope of services, schedule, and cost items. As previously discussed, delays in receiving the travel demand model and need to reschedule potential subsurface archaeological excavation until after identification of the preferred alternative has resulted in a 2 year delay in the completion of the PA/ED process to the Fall of 2009. Overall phasing/development schemes to expedite project development and construction, should funding become available, will be developed over the coming year.

Staff will bring forward proposed amendments to the PA/ED contract for consideration by the RTC and potential inclusion in the proposed 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) augmentation.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Caltrans will provide a status report on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project. A Project Development Team meeting is planned for mid-December to review progress on the construction schedule and specific cost items in detail.

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The next scheduled meeting of the HCA, set for January 5th, is subject to change due to the holiday calendar.

SUMMARY

Updates on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project, the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project, and the Highway 1 Construction Authority are included in this staff report.