

AGENDA: June 7, 2007

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

---

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS***

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Receive a status report on activities related to the Highway 1 Projects;
  2. Receive the *Executive Summary of the Transit Market Analysis for the Highway 1 Corridor (Attachment 1)* presented by Chris Metzger, Nolte Associates, and Gui Shearin, Parsons, prepared as part of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project with the cooperation of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District.
- 

### ***DISCUSSION***

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

As reported last month, full funding is now programmed through construction for the enhanced Highway 1 Soquel to Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project, which includes modification of the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange. The Project Development Team (PDT) is working closely with the Caltrans design and construction engineers on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project to coordinate project efforts.

This project is under close scrutiny by the California Transportation Commission (CTC), as are all projects receiving Proposition 1B – Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funds, to meet project delivery dates and stay within the approved budget. Baseline project performance standards have been set in collaboration with Caltrans, and the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Based on preliminary review, the critical path to the start of construction may be securing right-of-way certification for the construction of soundwalls. Accordingly, the next PDT meeting will be held in San Luis Obispo to explore and secure the dedication of necessary services for right-of-way activities through Caltrans District 5 staff.

The project team is planning to hold an Informational Open House in Fall 2007, date and location to be determined. A primary goal of this meeting is to display the design plans proposed for the modification of the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange, including the realignment of the northbound ramps on the mountain side of the highway. This work was not originally included in the Auxiliary Lanes project, but was made possible through the availability of CMIA funds to improve the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists at this location.

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

Following is status report on select items of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. A Quarterly Progress Report will be presented to the RTC in August.

### Draft Environmental Document

Technical environmental studies for the Highway 1 HOV Lane project are nearly complete and work is now focusing on the development of the administrative draft of the environmental documents expected to be delivered to Caltrans for their initial review in July 2007. Following Caltrans review and response to any comments Caltrans may have, representatives of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will review the documents. After the FHWA's authorization, the draft environmental documents will be released to the public and local agencies for review and comment. FHWA authorization to release the draft environmental documents is expected in late February/early March 2008.

Both Caltrans' and FHWA's review of the draft environmental documents pertain to thoroughness and compliance with current environmental requirements. Release of the draft environmental document is expected in Spring 2008. The public and all local agencies will have 60 business days from release of the documents to review and submit comments. Following the public review period the Project Development Team (PDT) will respond to comments and make any necessary revisions to the draft environmental documents. With the benefit of the updated environmental information, it is expected that the RTC will be able to make a recommendation to Caltrans as to the preferred alternative in September 2008. Caltrans, as owner/operator of the highway, formally selects the preferred alternative following RTC's action.

### Public Outreach - Project Newsletter

In preparation for the release of the draft environmental documents, the PDT has recommended an outreach program to provide broad based information on the project as well as focused discussion on specific issues and community interests. As part of this effort the PDT has recommended the preparation of an updated project newsletter. The previous newsletter was published last year in the Summer of 2006. Since that time considerable progress has been made on the project, including: refinement of the project alternatives and engineering design details including the location of proposed auxiliary lanes on both alternatives. In addition, a series of Mobility Analysis reports have either been completed or are nearing completion, including the *Transit Market Analysis*, the *Park and Ride Lot Study*, and information pertaining to induced travel.

The target audience for the newsletter is individuals and organizations that have expressed interest and/or participated in the Highway 1 planning effort to date. Distribution will be to Transportation Funding Task Force member organizations and other community and social service organizations. The newsletter will also be available at local area libraries and posted on the RTC and Caltrans websites.

Preparation of the initial English version of the newsletter will be produced by the project consultants with review and input by members of the PDT. Production and mailing of the newsletter is managed by RTC staff through funding provided in the FY 07-08 Budget for public information and outreach on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. A Spanish version of the newsletter will be produced, distributed, and posted on the RTC and Caltrans' websites.

Staff and the project consultants have begun work to set up a speaker's bureau and presentation material to conduct focus group meetings with various organizations and associations. Target groups would include neighborhood associations, business organizations, social/civic organizations, and special interest groups. The updated project newsletter will be used to solicit interest from community organizations in having a more complete presentation on the project. Staff anticipates scheduling these presentations beginning in the Fall of 2007 and concluding just prior to the release of the draft environmental document.

Separate public hearing(s) will be conducted in the Spring/Summer of 2008 in association with the release of the draft environmental document.

### Transit Market Analysis

The *Transit Market Analysis* is one of three special studies under way to explore and develop one of the purposes of the Highway 1 HOV Lane project, which states "encourage carpooling and use of alternative transportation modes as a means to increase capacity." The other studies include the *Park-and-Ride Study* and the *Multi-Modal Access Study* to identify the effects of the project on pedestrian and bicycle operations.

The *Transit Market Analysis* was conducted in cooperation with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD) and has three primary objectives:

1. To identify and quantify the potential market for freeway-oriented transit services on Highway 1;
2. To determine how much of the expected transit market would likely be captured by each of the project alternatives; and,
3. To determine what, if any, enhancements would optimize transit service in the corridor in association with improvements to Highway 1.

Chris Metzger, Nolte Project Manager, and Gui Shearin, Parsons Transportation Manager, will provide an oral report of the findings as presented in the *Executive Summary of the Transit Market Analysis for the Highway 1 Corridor (Attachment 1)*. This report will be posted on the RTC's project website and referenced in the updated project newsletter.

### **Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)**

The next meeting of the HCA is currently scheduled for September 3<sup>rd</sup> at the County Administrative Building.

## ***SUMMARY***

Full funding is now programmed for construction of the enhanced Highway 1 Soquel to Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project, which includes modification of the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange. The project team is planning to hold an Informational Open House on the project in Fall 2007, date and location to be determined. Staff and consultants will produce, print, and distribute an updated English and Spanish language newsletter for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. An oral report will be provided on the *Executive Summary of the Transit Market Analysis for the Highway 1 Corridor* (Attachment 1). This report will be posted on the RTC's project website.

### Attachments:

1. *Executive Summary of Transit Market Analysis for the Highway 1 Corridor*, dated May 17, 2007.