

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** SCCRTC **DATE:** November 14, 2007

**FROM:** Nolte Associates, Inc. **PROJ #:** Route 1 HOV Lane  
Widening (SJ0086001)  
and Soquel/Morrissey  
(SJ0086002)

**SUBJECT:** Commission Status Report for Period:  
August 2007 through October 2007

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1) **PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes)**



The Consultant Team received Notice to Proceed in January, 2007.

a) **Environmental**

An Initial Study / Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) report will be prepared for this project to meet the requirements of both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. No significant impacts are anticipated for the proposed project, enabling preparation of a Negative Declaration (Neg Dec) under CEQA and a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) under NEPA.

Environmental Studies have been initiated based on the design drawings for one build alternative, the Auxiliary Lanes Alternative, with the “no improvements” option at Morrissey Interchange which were approved by Caltrans, the Project Development Team (PDT) RTC, and the City of Santa Cruz in November.. New noise and air quality modeling and new study area boundaries are required, and Caltrans has also requested that separate technical reports be prepared for each impacts category, but the impacts assessment will make maximum possible use of the studies performed for Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project.

The Environmental work currently underway includes: air quality, biological resources/wetlands, community impacts/land use/access and circulation, cultural resources, energy, floodplain, geologic and seismic, hazardous wastes, hydrology/water quality, noise, paleontology and visual/aesthetics.

The environmental document is scheduled to be circulated with a public hearing late in the summer of 2008. Completion of the environmental process is scheduled for Spring 2009.

b) **Engineering**

Geometric Development – Through coordination with Caltrans and the City, the PDT has recommended that no improvements to the Northbound Ramps be included as part of this project. Various improvement options pursued either did not provide the benefits desired, or were not able to be processed within the CMIA timeline. Geometric development of the recommended alternative is underway and a design check will be submitted to Caltrans for consideration/comment in November 2007.

Traffic Operations – Agreement was reached on the analysis methodology for this project, and analysis was initiated. Two traffic operation scenarios will now be generated, including: No Project (Baseline), and Auxiliary Lanes. The traffic operations analysis is a required first step to complete some of the environmental technical studies such as air quality and noise.

**c) Public Outreach**

With the decision to not pursue improvements to the Morrissey Interchange, the project scope remains consistent with that presented to the public last fall; thus no further project information meetings prior to the public hearing on the environmental document are planned. As appropriate, the project can be addressed as part of the HOV Speaker Bureau meetings. A formal public meeting will be held during circulation of the Draft ED next summer.

**d) Schedule**

A draft detailed schedule through final design has been developed and is being used by the PDT to coordinate and monitor project progress. The following are major milestones in the current schedule. The scheduled completion of the ED is Spring, 2009.

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis        | May '07 – Nov'07                                      |
| ➤ Admin Draft ED to RTC and Caltrans | February '08  |
| ➤ Public Circulation                 | Late Summer '08                                       |
| ➤ Final ED submittal to FHWA         | February '09  |
| ➤ Approval of Final Environmental    | May/June 2009   |
| ➤ Document and Project Report        |   |
| ➤ Final Design                       | [Allow 27 months, begin design to begin construction] |
| ➤ Begin Final Design*                | October '07 [Begin aerial mapping s – Nov 07]         |
| ➤ Begin Construction**               | January '10   |

\* Initial Activity = Aerial Mapping. Long lead item.

\*\* Assumes 3 months from completion of PS&E to begin construction.

**2) PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (HOV Project)****a) Environmental****i) Technical Studies**

All draft; technical reports in support of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment were completed and submitted to Caltrans for review in August, 2007. Caltrans comments have been received on about half of the reports; two reports received no comments. Revisions are being performed. The studies/reports include:

- air quality
- biology
- community impact/land use
- cultural resources
- energy
- geology/seismic
- growth inducement
- hazardous wastes
- hydrology/water quality
- noise
- paleontology
- transit market analysis
- visual

**ii) Other Environmental Issues****(1) Global Warming [unchanged]**

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has not yet issued methodology for evaluating greenhouse gases at a project level. In conformance to the Caltrans' guidance, the project addresses this issue through a qualitative analytical approach. The project is designed to reduce congestion and provide increased incentive for people to carpool or use transit.

**(2) Growth Inducement: [unchanged]**

A quantitative growth inducement study incorporating reviews by a panel of local land economics and real estate professionals was performed and incorporated into the administrative draft EIR/EA.

**(3) Transit Market Analysis**

A quantitative analysis based on the AMBAG travel model results and extensive consultation with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD) was performed to identify current demand for Highway 1 transit services, quantify the latent demand that could be served, and estimate the increased transit usage with the HOV Lane project alternatives. Results were incorporated into the administrative draft EIR/EA.

**(4) California Coastal Commission**

The southern reach of this project falls within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission (CCC). A coastal development permit will be required. An initial meeting was held in January 2007 to introduce the project and identify CCC concerns and perspectives pending resolution of geometric design for both build alternatives. A second coordination meeting is being organized for Jan/Feb 2008.

## iii) Environmental Document (EIR/EA)

The Administrative Draft Environmental Document was submitted for review by RTC/Caltrans in August 2007. Comments from Caltrans were received late in September, 2007. Discussions to resolve and clarify approaches were conducted, and the document is being updated to reflect comments and incorporate agreed-upon modifications. Completion of revisions is pending receipt of Caltrans remaining comments on the technical reports.

b) **Engineering**

## i) Geometric Development

a.) The Nolte team continues to coordinate the development of the Alternatives with RTC, Caltrans and the County. The Alternatives under development are:

- No- Build Alternative
- Ramp Metering and Auxiliary Lane or Transportation Systems Management (TSM)
- HOV Lane Alternative

The HOV Lane Alternative combines the “best” aspects of the previous standard and reduced width alternatives, meeting standards where possible, but also pursuing design exceptions where appropriate to reduce impacts to right of way, bridges, utilities and infrastructure, wetlands, habitat areas, and other environmental elements. Initial geometric development was prepared and design check sets for both build alternatives with design exceptions for the most critical elements (primarily shoulder width) were submitted in August 2007, to Caltrans for review. Comments from Caltrans were received late October, 2007 and are being reviewed.

Formal “approval” of additional design exceptions dealing with specific ramp geometry and similar items will occur with full “Geometric Approval Drawings” after selection of a preferred alternative (anticipated in the summer of 2008).

## b.) Soquel Interchange:

Multiple geometric configurations for Soquel Interchange were developed and reviewed with the County and Caltrans. The most recent option provides access to Commercial Way from the State Route 1 northbound off-ramp. This configuration impacts up to 45 parking spaces at the retail site immediately adjacent to the ramp. Caltrans has stated this design is unacceptable, stating it is an “isolated ramp.” Previous options were unacceptable to the County because they did not provide direct access to Commercial Way.

## ii) Traffic Modeling Analysis

- a. The Traffic Operation Report (TOR) was approved in August 2007.
- b. Supplemental Reports: The following Supplemental Reports have been or are being prepared, as noted.
  - Traffic Market Analysis (Draft Complete)
  - Park & Ride lot Study (Draft Complete)
  - Parking impacts study (Draft Complete)
  - Multimodal Study (Draft Complete)
  - Bus Pad Memorandum (Draft being Developed)
  - Mobility Study (Draft being Developed)

## iii) Project Report and Attachments

- a. Project Report (PR) - An administrative Draft PR was prepared in parallel with the Environmental Document. The PR summarizes the engineering design development and process issues for the project. This report acts as the formal transmittal document for the Environmental Document. This was submitted to CT on August 24, 2007. Comments were received October 29, 2007 and are being reviewed.
- b. Storm Water Data Report (SWDR) – the draft SWDR has been submitted to Caltrans for review. This document incorporates information from previous discussions with Caltrans related to potential treatment BMPs (Best Management Practices), approach to address the project impacts and requirements of the clean water requirements by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Comments were received August 24, 2007. Resolution of comments is currently in process.
- c. Structural – Conceptual Bridge Plans or Advance Planning Studies (APS) are being prepared for the structures requiring modification. Work continues using the HOV Geometry as the most conservative approach for assessing more detailed issues, and establishing costs.

c) **Public Outreach Activities (HOV Project)**

- i) Newsletter - An updated newsletter was created with contributions from Caltrans, RTC and the consultant team. A final draft of the newsletter was submitted to RTC in August, 2007 for printing and distribution in both English and Spanish.
- ii) Next Steps – As part of the newsletter mailing, RTC is offering to come speak to local interest groups to provide updates on the project. It is anticipated these presentations will occur throughout the late Fall and Winter, in preparation of the release of the environmental document in the Spring of 2008.

d) **Schedule/Budget (HOV)**

The following are major milestones in the current schedule. The schedule is very similar to that presented for the last year. The anticipated completion is still scheduled for late Fall, 2009, or early 2010.

➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis	Aug '05 – January '07	[Analysis Complete]
➤ Admin Draft EA/EIR	June/July '07	[Draft to CT in August]
➤ Public Circulation	Spring '08	
➤ Select Preferred Alternative	Summer '08	
➤ Archaeological Subsurface Work	Fall/Winter '09	
○ Potential Begin “Design at Speed”	January, 2009	
➤ SHPO concurrence	Winter, '09	
➤ Final EA/EIR submittal to FHWA	Fall '09	
➤ Approval of Final Environmental Document and Project Report	Winter/Spring 2010	
➤ <i>Potential First Construction Contract</i>	2011	

Additional budget is required to complete the Environmental Document for the HOV project. Current estimates are that the remaining budget would allow for review and revisions to Caltrans comments received on the Administrative Draft but may not be sufficient to complete and circulate the Draft Environmental Document, nor will it allow for further development of a preferred alternative. The

Consultant Team and RTC staff are discussing proposed scope amendments and funding needs to complete the ED/PA Phase.

3) **NEXT UPDATE – FEBRUARY, 2008**