

MEMORANDUM

TO: SCCRTC **DATE:** August 15, 2008

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

SUBJECT: Commission Status Report for Period:
May 2008 through July 2008

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 Technical Studies have been completed based on the design drawings for one build alternative, the Auxiliary Lanes Alternative, with the “no improvements” option at Morrissey Interchange.

The environmental document technical reports for this project include: 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. Caltrans and RTC continue to coordinate on potential refinements to the technical approach to address greenhouse gases in the environmental document.

The Draft Environmental Document (DED) and technical reports were submitted for FHWA review in July 2008. FHWA comments were received, reviewed and resolution is ongoing. The DED is scheduled to be circulated in mid September and a public hearing held in early October 2008. Completion of the environmental process is scheduled for summer 2009.

b) **Engineering**

RTC, Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission have agreed to the change in the project scope to reflect the current project design, the process of which will be recorded through the environmental documentation and Project Report.

i) Project Report and Attachments

Project Report (PR) - The Draft Project Report was submitted for FHWA review in July 2008. FHWA comments were received, reviewed and resolved in July 2008. The Draft Project Report was submitted to Caltrans for signatures in August 2008. The project proposes to construct a 22' wide median and a Fact Sheet for the non standard median (advisory standard) width (36') was approved by Caltrans in August 2008.

- a. Storm Water Data Report (SWDR) – 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). Storm Water Data Report for the project was approved by Caltrans in June 2008.
- b. Structural – Conceptual Bridge Plans (or Advance Planning Studies (APS)) have been prepared for the La Fonda Avenue overcrossing. APS was reviewed by Caltrans and updated APS was submitted with the updated draft Project Report in July 2008.
- c. Traffic Operations – The traffic operations report was approved by Caltrans in February, 2008.

c) Public Outreach

A single open house followed by a formal public hearing is proposed for this project. The PDT proposed holding an open house with comprehensive project displays 2 hours before convening a formal public hearing facilitated by a Caltrans representative to receive public comments. The meeting will be held at a convenient location proximate to the project area and the formal public hearing would be preceded by a brief description of the project and explanation of the project development process.

Members of the public would also have the opportunity to submit written comments on the draft environmental document any time during the public review period, either by regular mail or electronic mail (email). Public circulation of the draft environmental documents is expected in mid September and the scheduled duration of the public review period is 30 days.

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 summer, 2009.

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| ➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis | May 2007 – Nov 2007 (Approved Feb 2008) |
| ➤ Admin Draft ED to RTC and Caltrans | February 2008 (Submitted Feb 2008) |
| ➤ Public Circulation | September 2008 [CMIA schedule = July '08] |
| ➤ Final ED submittal to FHWA | February/March 2009 |
| ➤ Approval of Final Environmental Document and Project Report | May/June 2009 [CMIA schedule = June '09] |
| ➤ Begin Final Design | September 2008 |
| ➤ Final Design Complete | Late 2009 |
| ➤ Begin Construction | Spring 2010 |

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (HOV Project)**a) Environmental****ii) 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 all 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 use, economic development, and real estate professionals was performed and incorporated into the administrative draft EIR/EA.

(3) Transit Market Analysis [unchanged]

A quantitative analysis based on the AMBAG travel model results and extensive consultation with METRO 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 [unchanged]

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 2006. A second coordination meeting was held in March 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 through the fall of 2007. Discussions to resolve and clarify approaches were conducted, and the document is being updated to reflect comments and incorporate agreed-upon modifications. The updated environmental document with technical reports is scheduled for submittal in September, 2008 for Caltrans review.

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

Updated geometrics plans were submitted to Caltrans in April 2008. Caltrans comments were received in July 2008 and are being reviewed and resolved.

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 early 2009).

b.) Soquel Interchange:

Multiple geometric configurations for Soquel Interchange were developed and reviewed with the County and Caltrans. There are two options under consideration at this time. 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. County is evaluating the trade off of the access versus loss in parking spaces. This issue remains unresolved.

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.
 - Transit Market Analysis (Draft Complete)
 - Park & Ride lot Study (Draft Complete)
 - Parking impacts study (Draft Complete)
 - Multimodal Study (Draft Complete)
 - Bus Pad Memorandum (Draft complete)
 - Mobility Study (Draft being refined)

iii) Project Report and Attachments

- a. Project Report (PR) - 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 resolved. The updated draft PR is scheduled for submittal to Caltrans in September 2008.

- b. Storm Water Data Report (SWDR) – 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 on a draft submittal were received August 24, 2007. Resolution of comments is on hold, pending Caltrans' coordination with the Regional Board.
- c. Structural – Conceptual Bridge Plans or Advance Planning Studies (APS) have been prepared for the 15 structures (some new and some existing that require replacement or modification). Work continues using the HOV Geometry as the most conservative approach for assessing more detailed issues, and establishing costs. APSs are included with the geometric submittals for Caltrans review.

iv) New Study Reports

a. Sustainable Design Elements

This study will assess and document sustainable design elements for inclusion in the project development process (and the project). This effort includes development and approval of an education and collaboration process for identifying, evaluating and documenting potential sustainable elements that would be desirable for inclusion in the project.

b. Bike Path

The purpose of this study to outline the feasibility of constructing an 8.5 mile long bike path along the Route 1 corridor from Santa Cruz to Watsonville. This study would identify opportunities, constraints and cost of constructing a bike path parallel to Route 1, within the HOV Project limits and Caltrans right-of-way for non-motorized travel. The administrative draft is ready for staff review.

c. Aesthetic Treatment

The intent of this document is to provide RTC with guidelines on the formation and responsibilities of an Aesthetic Review Board procedure for developing and approving visual guidelines for the aesthetic elements of the project. It is expected that the guidelines will address the appearance of design elements such as: Architectural elements of bridges such as columns, cross section shapes, barriers, slope paving, and facades, sound walls and retaining walls, roadway barriers fences and landscaping.

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

- i) Current Activity – As a part of broader outreach effort, Highway 1 HOV Lane project updates are being presented as part of a “Speakers Bureau” outreach effort. Groups such as social service and community organizations, Chambers of Commerce, the Business Council, as well as the cities, have accepted invitations to present these updates. Presentations began in February of this year and are scheduled through mid-August. A total of 28 presentations have been made or are scheduled to the following groups and organizations:

- Cities: Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville
- Davenport Resource Center
- Chambers: Aptos, Capitola, Pajaro Valley, Santa Cruz,
- Harvey West Business Association
- San Lorenzo Valley Women's Club
- Santa Cruz Visitor's
- Son's In Retirement – Aptos and Santa Cruz Chapters

- The League of Women Voters
 - Various Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary Chapters throughout the county
- ii) Public Hearing - A process similar to the Auxiliary Lanes Project is proposed for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project, however, three meetings are proposed at geographically spaced locations given the length and complexity of the HOV Lanes Project. The open house format would include comprehensive exhibits/displays for participants to view and discuss the items with members of the project team. Participants could provide comments during the Open House portion of the meeting either in written form or verbally to a court reporter at a separate information station available to record public comments.

A Formal Public Hearing would follow the Open House, convened by a Caltrans representative. A brief presentation would precede the public hearing providing a description of the project and orientation on how to provide testimony on the environmental documents. A court reporter would create a verbatim record of the proceedings to ensure all comments and questions are addressed in preparation of the final environmental document

The exact date of public release of the draft environmental documents is not known at this time, but expected to be in late 2008, with a minimum 45-day public review period (to be determined by Caltrans the lead agency for the environmental process). The RTC has recommended that Caltrans provide a 60-day public review period.

d) Schedule/Budget (HOV)

The following are major milestones in the current schedule. The anticipated completion is scheduled for 2010.

➤ Traffic Modeling / Analysis	Aug 2005 – January 2007 [Analysis Complete]
➤ Admin Draft EA/EIR	June/July '07 [Updated Draft to CT in Sept 08]
➤ Public Circulation	December 2008
➤ Select Preferred Alternative	Winter 2009
➤ Archaeological Subsurface Work	Winter/Spring 2009
➤ SHPO concurrence	Spring 2010 [Believed conservative estimate]
➤ Final EA/EIR submittal to FHWA	Spring 2010
➤ Approval of Final Environmental Document and Project Report	Summer 2010
➤ <i>Potential First Construction Contract</i>	<i>Spring 2011</i>

2) **NEXT UPDATE – December, 2008**