

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge Project

**MEETING DATE:** June 17, 2010

**AGENDA ITEM:** 11

**STAFF CONTACT:** Steve VanDenburgh

### RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Authorize Executive Director to sign project baseline agreement with the California Transportation Commission.
- B. Authorize the Executive Director to sign all other agreements required to expedite the project.

### SUMMARY:

Last month, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) programmed \$31.6 million to the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge project from the Proposition 1B Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) program. This new discretionary funding is a result of more than three years of effort by SBCAG and our partners at Caltrans District 5 and SLOCOG to close the construction funding shortfall on the project. The next step in the CMIA funding process is for the partner agencies to sign a baseline agreement with the CTC documenting the scope, cost and schedule for the construction of the project and committing our \$10 million local match of Measure A funds. The project also needs an allocation vote from the CTC, but before that can happen, all other partners aside from the CTC must sign the baseline agreement. Staff is recommending the Executive Director be authorized to sign the agreement so the project can remain agendaized for the June 30/July 1 CTC meeting.

Other agreements, such as a construction cooperative agreement with Caltrans, will need to be executed before the project can begin construction. Because the availability of general obligation bond funds used for the CMIA program arise and disappear so quickly, it is recommended by Caltrans that the Executive Director be authorized to sign all other agreements so as to optimize the project's chances of being funded as soon as possible after the June 30/July 1 CTC meeting. Providing this authority will help ensure that the bridge project retains its place in line for bond funding and that there will be no construction delays resulting from not having the necessary agreements in place.

### DISCUSSION:

At the May California Transportation Committee meeting, the Commission amended the Proposition 1B Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) program to include the Highway 101 Santa Maria River Bridge project and programmed \$31.6 million to the bridge from costs savings realized on previously funded CMIA projects. This funding closes the shortfall in the project's financial plan and fast-tracks the project for construction.

#### Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

The bridge project will be a tremendous improvement to the transportation infrastructure in the Santa Maria Valley. At this gateway location, Highway 101 is the major north-south corridor between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, and between Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and military installations and agricultural areas on the Central Coast. The project will expand the current four-lane bridge to six lanes, eliminate a bottleneck where a current six-lane section ends south of the bridge, and create safer access from Highway 135 to Highway 166 (north of the river) by extending a six lane section across the river. The project will reduce rear-end and weaving crashes caused by current merging configurations (the accident rate is twice the statewide average for a similar type bridge facility with comparable traffic volumes), add multi-modal access for bicycles and pedestrians (none currently exist), and accommodate a projected increase in traffic from 64,000 vehicles per day currently to 100,700 by 2030. Trucks make up about 7.4 percent of the total traffic in the project area. It will also enhance public safety by creating adequate shoulders for emergency vehicles. Finally, it will allow the opportunity to incorporate Intelligent Transportation System elements such as surveillance stations, changeable message signs, highway advisory radio, and closed circuit television cameras. It is estimated that the project will create approximately 875 jobs.

The project has a strong three-way partnership and support between SLOCOG, SBCAG and Caltrans. All three agencies have contributed funding to the project. Design for this project was partially funded with Federal Demonstration funds secured by Congresswoman Lois Capps.

A number of steps need to be completed before the project can be put out to bid. The first is for the partners to sign a baseline agreement with the California Transportation Commission. The agreement is attached to this staff report. The purpose of the agreement is to document the project cost, schedule, scope and benefits, as were previously detailed to the commission at the time CMIA funding was requested. The agreement serves as the baseline for project monitoring by the CTC and is required for all Proposition 1B funded projects. By signing the agreement, SBCAG also certifies that \$10 million in Measure A funding is committed and available as a local match to fund construction.

Approval of the baseline agreement, and a request for a construction funding allocation, are scheduled to be on the CTC's meeting agenda for June 30/July 1. Staff expects that the Commission will approve the baseline agreement and place the project on a list of projects "delivered but not allocated". This will mean that the project will be in line to receive funding when the State has issued a sufficient amount of general obligation bonds to fund this and other projects in the bond-funded Proposition 1B program. If the agreement is not signed by SBCAG prior to the June 30/July 1 CTC meeting, it would result in the item being pulled from the CTC agenda. The project would not lose the \$31.6 million in funding approved by the commission in May, however, a delay in the item on the June 30/July 1 CTC agenda might delay the bridge project's access to bond funds when they become available since there are other projects seeking an allocation of Prop 1B bond funds.

Additional steps required to put the project out to bid will include the project partners signing a separate construction cooperative agreement. The agreement is still being drafted and it would be finalized by the end of June, after SBCAG's June board meeting and prior to SBCAG's July board meeting. Caltrans District 5 recommends that the Executive Director be authorized to execute the agreement as soon as it is finalized to maximize the project's chances that it could receive funding if bond fund availability is suddenly announced, as does happen. The construction cooperative agreement typically goes beyond the scope, cost and schedule of the baseline agreement to define the roles of the agencies involved in the project. This would

include Caltrans as the lead agency for advertising (bidding), awarding and constructing the project. SBCAG would provide assistance to Caltrans by creating and implementing the Traffic Demand Management program, similar to Curb Your Commute on the Milpas\Hot Springs project, but on a smaller scale and scope. Construction cooperative agreements also include indemnification by Caltrans of the partners (SBCAG and SLOCOG) for the field work that Caltrans is oversighting.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Executive Director be authorized to sign the project baseline agreement. The agreement has already been signed by the SLOCOG Executive Director. SBCAG staff also recommends that the Executive Director be authorized to sign all other agreements that are consistent with previous board direction and policy, in addition to the baseline agreement, to keep the project on a fast-track.

**COMMITTEE REVIEW:** None.











