

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: South Coast Highway 101 HOV Lanes Widening Project

MEETING DATE: May 6, 2009 **AGENDA ITEM:** 7

STAFF CONTACT: Gregg Hart

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a report on the status of the South Coast Highway 101 HOV Lanes Widening Project.

SUMMARY:

The South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project is the fourth and final phase of the 101 freeway widening in south Santa Barbara County. The first phase of the 101 widening, from Milpas St. to Hot Springs/Cabrillo is fully funded with Measure D Regional funds and State Proposition 1B funds and is currently under construction. In June, the project will pass its first year of construction with completion scheduled for 2012. The second phase, from Mussel Shoals in Ventura County to Carpinteria is also fully funded with State Proposition 1B funds and is scheduled to begin construction in 2011. Phase 3, reconstruction of the Casitas Pass and Linden Ave. Interchanges, is required to meet Caltrans' design standards when the widening is extended through Carpinteria. The draft environmental document for the project has completed public circulation, and the final document is being prepared by Caltrans. Full funding has not yet been secured for this project, but \$66.5 million of the estimated \$107 million needed for environmental studies, design and construction have been programmed to the project by SBCAG and Caltrans from STIP funds. Construction could begin as early as 2013, depending on the availability of STIP funding, which will be determined as part of the Measure A Strategic Plan.

The final phase of the 101 widening, the ten mile gap from Hot Springs/Cabrillo to Carpinteria, is described as the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project. Caltrans District 5 is the lead agency for environmental preparation for this estimated \$425 million project. SBCAG is the primary project sponsor. Project partners include the City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara, City of Carpinteria, SBCAG and Caltrans. The Measure A Investment Plan dedicated \$140 million for construction of this project, but the remaining funding has not yet been identified.

A multi-agency Project Development Team has been meeting since February 2008 to initiate and coordinate environmental and traffic studies and to begin addressing design issues. The South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project is nearing an important public planning milestone. The Environmental Impact Report scoping hearings are planned for early July 2009. Two public meetings are being scheduled to solicit public comment on scoping issues for environmental review, one in Carpinteria and one in Montecito.

Member Agencies

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

DISCUSSION:

The South Coast HOV Lanes project is intended to reduce congestion and delay, provide capacity for future travel demand, encourage modal shift to transit and carpooling, and improve travel time on U.S. 101 within the project limits. This project will facilitate the flow of goods and services through the corridor and minimize diversion of freeway trips onto the local road system.

This project was initiated to implement one of the key elements from the *101 In Motion* consensus recommended package of projects; namely, an HOV lane on Route 101 from Milpas south to the county line. This proposed project is one of six elements that are being implemented through *101 In Motion*. Together this package will implement a multi-modal strategy to accommodate future travel demand while facilitating a modal shift to carpooling, transit, and passenger rail. Other consensus recommended *101 In Motion* elements include:

- New commuter friendly passenger rail service
- Facilitation of transit and carpool use
- Demand management strategies
- Improved operations and transportation communications, and
- Phased improvements north of Milpas Street

Traffic volume is overwhelming the existing capacity of the U.S. 101 during weekday and weekend peak periods. Route 101 within the project limits typically operates with congested flow (Level of Service F) conditions during weekday and weekend peak periods. These conditions typically occur for one to four hours daily in each direction and result in significant travel delay.

Without capacity improvements, LOS F conditions are forecast to exceed ten hours a day in each direction by 2030. The expected rise in traffic volumes, congestion, and delay is a result of several factors, including increased long distance commuting from Ventura County, internal population growth, and interregional traffic growth, including goods movement.

A multi-agency project design team has been meeting since February 2008 to coordinate the preparation of environmental and traffic technical studies that are the foundation of the draft environmental document. The team has been guided by the following project principles:

- Project design is to be compatible with existing community character while addressing user and maintenance worker safety.
- Visual and coastal resources are to be preserved and/or mitigated to the greatest extent feasible.
- Adverse impacts to historical and cultural resources are to be avoided or mitigated to the greatest extent feasible.
- Acquisition of private property is to be minimized.
- Financial viability is a key constraint; alternatives under consideration should be feasible within the anticipated long-term funding stream for the project.
- Opportunities for stakeholder and public input and involvement will be provided throughout the project development process.

The South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project will be the most expensive and complicated transportation project ever undertaken in Santa Barbara County. A detailed preliminary design, environmental review and permitting schedule are attached for your review.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a report on the status of the Highway 101 South Coast HOV Lanes Widening.

Attachments: South Coast 101 Schedule, Highway 101 Corridor Projects Map

South Coast

HOV LANES



Preliminary Design, Environmental Review & Permitting Schedule

Phase I: Pre-Scoping (Fall 2008 – Spring 2009)

- Engage local stakeholders regarding the project guiding principles and history
- Explain the project's context in the larger corridor and relation to other projects
- Introduce the integrated technical and stakeholder involvement approach
- Conduct an initial issues scan among key stakeholders to support a more efficient and streamlined environmental scoping process
- Identify stakeholders not yet aware of or involved in the project

Phase II: Environmental Scoping (Summer 2009 – Spring 2011)

- Meet CEQA/NEPA environmental scoping requirements for public involvement
- Receive local design input
- Present project information at concept review meetings for each of the local permitting agencies.
- Refine and/or confirm project scope
- Assess visual and aesthetic impacts and identify visual mitigation strategies

Phase III: Draft Environmental Review and Final EIR (Spring 2011 – Winter 2012)

- Meet CEQA and NEPA legal requirements for draft environmental document review and public involvement
- Select preferred alternative

Phase IV: Permitting and Design (Spring 2012 – Spring 2013)

- Engage Coastal Development Permitting (CDP) agencies in CDP application process
- Attend public hearings and present project information as needed
- Secure coastal development and other local permits

Route 101 Corridor Projects

Mussel Shoals to the City of Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara County

Ventura County

PHASE 1 Milpas to Hot Springs Operational Improvements (2.0 miles)

Add lanes on Route 101, north and southbound between Cabrillo Road and Milpas Street in Santa Barbara. Includes local road improvements and bicycle /pedestrian enhancements.

Status: Begin construction Summer 2008
 Estimated Construction Cost: \$53 million
 Construction Schedule: 2008 - 2012
 Funded by Measure D and RIP

PHASE 4 South Coast Highway 101 High Occupany Vehicle Lanes (10.3 miles)

Add median HOV lanes on Route 101, north and southbound

Status: Public circulation of draft environmental document - Spring 2011
 Estimated Construction Cost: \$425 million
 Construction Schedule: 2014 - 2020
 Funded by RIP, IIP and \$140 million in Measure A

PHASE 3 Linden and Casitas Pass Interchanges (1.1 miles)

Reconstruct interchanges, replace Carpinteria Creek Bridge, and provide new Via Real connection south to Bailard Avenue

Status: Public circulation of draft environmental document - Fall 2008
 Estimated Construction Cost: \$70 million
 Construction Schedule: 2012 - 2015
 Funded by State Gas Tax funds

PHASE 2 Santa Barbara County/Ventura County High Occupany Vehicle Lanes (6.0 miles)

Add median HOV lanes on Route 101, north and southbound

Status: Public circulation of draft environmental document - Summer 2008
 Estimated Construction Cost: \$132 million
 Construction Schedule: 2011 - 2013
 Funded by Proposition 1B funds

Santa Barbara

Montecito

Summerland

Carpinteria

La Conchita

Mussel Shoals

