

RCT Meeting

November 7, 2019

Request to begin Environmental Phase of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes between State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard Project

Staff Direction

“Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations with Caltrans for a cooperative agreement outlining the responsibilities of the RTC and Caltrans District 5 for the environmental phase of the Highway 1 State Park/Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project.
2. Authorize the Executive Director to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure a professional engineering consultant to prepare the preliminary engineering and environmental documentation for the Highway 1 State Park/Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project.”

Background

The Corridor Investment Program on Highway 1 was created to improve access and decrease congestion getting to and from Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County. The project includes shoulder improvements, auxiliary lanes and overhead crossings for bicycle and pedestrian. Additionally future plans include interchange modifications, ramp metering and High Occupancy Vehicle lanes.

“The RTC, in cooperation with Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), prepared a combined Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for the Tier I programmatic-level long range vision for the Highway 1 corridor and the Tier II (project level) 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes and Bike/Ped Overcrossing Project. The Final EIR/EA was certified in January 2019.

In 2018 the RTC advanced and implemented the final design for the Highway 1 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes, Bus on Shoulder, and Bike/Ped Overcrossing Project to achieve project readiness for funding opportunities, which is scheduled to be 31-1 Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes (State Park Dr to Freedom Boulevard) Page 2 construction-ready in 2020 pending availability of funds for construction. Staff plans to apply for construction funds in cycle 2 of the Senate Bill 1 (SB1) Solutions for Congested Corridors (SCCP) and Local Partnership Program-Competitive (LPP-c) programs, with applications estimated to be due in early 2020. Cycle 2 of the SCCP and LPP-c program will allocate funds over FY 20/21, 21/22, and 22/23.

Earlier this year the RTC entered into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans and awarded a consultant contract for the preliminary engineering and environmental phase of the Highway 1 Bay/Porter to State Park Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project which is underway. This project is scheduled to be construction ready in 2022.”

RTC Commission Action

Summary of Motion

RTC Commission Vote

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supports increasing the traffic flow on Highway 1 with auxillary lane extensions as described in the RTC staff report. Transportation is a pressing issue in our community. It effects people's access to work and school, which can be either helpful or harmful to the economic vitality of Santa Cruz. While the Chamber advocates for the usage of multi-modal transportation, reduction on single car trips, we are also committed to recognizing and respecting the needs auto dependent residents of our community.