

**NORTH COUNTY CORRIDOR
TRANSPORTATION EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY**

ITEM: 3a

SUBJECT:

NCC Schedule

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Discussion Only

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not determined

DISCUSSION:

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released for public comments on September 25, 2009 for a 45-day circulation period. Two public hearings were held on October 13th and October 22nd, 2009. The public comment period closed on November 6, 2009. Our original schedule targeted a January 2010 California Transportation Commission (CTC) approval of the environmental document and route adoption. To meet this schedule, Jacobs submitted an Administrative Final EIR to Caltrans on November 16, 2009. In order to meet the schedule for the January 2010 CTC meeting, Caltrans and the JPA team identified a schedule that called for Caltrans completing their QA/QC review by December 10, 2009, with the District 10 Director approval of the Final EIR by January 4, 2010. This assumed that the "Response to Comments" provided as an appendix to the Final EIR would address many of the numerous public comments with master responses, as applicable, supplemented by individual responses where necessary.

This aggressive schedule was revised after a discussion with Caltrans Director, Randy Iwasaki on funding opportunities in the 2010 STIP. The State of California is facing substantial budgetary shortfalls and as a result, the 2010 STIP allowed little opportunity for ITIP funding for the North County Corridor construction project. Director Iwasaki indicated that Caltrans would continue with its commitment to nominate the NCC for ITIP funding for the NCC when it becomes available in the 2012 STIP cycle. As a result, the team agreed to target the April CTC meeting (the March CTC meeting is dedicated to the STIP hearings), which would still meet the overall goal of delivering a completed document by the 2010 STIP adoption. Jacobs received preliminary peer review comments from Caltrans on January 6, 2010, and re-submitted the EIR on January 25, 2010. As a result of the extensive public input, the response to comments appendix of the EIR was over 800 pages in length.

Jacobs and NCCTEA staff met with Caltrans Central Region Environmental staff on March 1, 2010, to discuss proposed changes in the EIR and response to comments. The complexity and sheer volume of comments required detailed analysis to ensure that all comments were fully addressed. Some comments required changes to the EIR itself, while others included a synthesis of detailed information contained in the technical studies. In coordination with Jacobs and NCCTEA staff, Caltrans staff agreed to an intensified level of effort in an attempt to deliver the certified FEIR on March 23, 2010 at the earliest. This date would coincide with the CTC STIP hearings. The approval of the route adoption at the April CTC meeting was no longer

feasible due to the schedule slippage in finalizing the document. Therefore, the team agreed to send the documents to the CTC for approval at its May meeting.

Jacobs revised and resubmitted the EIR on March 8, 2010 to Caltrans to meet the March 23, 2010 approval of the EIR. Caltrans environmental staff reviewed portions of the document and instructed that Jacobs further clarify some of the individual responses to the comments. Though this request has resulted in a minor delay to our originally planned EIR approval date of March 23, 2010 we are still on track for the May CTC meeting. It is imperative to note that Caltrans has essentially bought off on the main environmental document – the revisions being addressed relate primarily to the appendix containing the responses to the comments to the Draft EIR. As a result of the revisions to the responses to the comments, some minor changes are anticipated to be made to the main portion of the EIR to provide additional clarification.

The recommended plan going forward is for Jacobs to address the comments and resubmit on March 22, 2010. Caltrans will release responses to the comments made by public agencies by March 25, 2010. Caltrans will complete their QA/QC reviews on the rest of the document by April 12, 2010 enabling the District 10 Director to approve the Final EIR by April 15, 2010. The schedule Caltrans concurred on is attached. After the District Director approval, the environmental document will be released to the public.

The CTC will consider approving the Route Adoption at its May CTC meeting scheduled for May 19th and 20th, 2010. This timing coincides with the adoption of the 2010 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) meeting our overall goal of getting the Route Adoption completed by the 2010 STIP.

Timeline	Activity/Task to be Completed
3/10/2010	Jacobs Environmental to meet with CR Environmental in Fresno to discuss ground rules of addressing comments
3/11 – 3/19/2010	Jacobs Environmental to re-work comments
3/19 – 3/21/2010	Jacobs to reproduce Final EIR
3/22/2010	Jacobs to submit Final EIR to CR Caltrans
3/22/2010	Jacobs to include CEQA Statement of Overriding Considerations and Findings
3/23 – 3/25/2010	CR Environmental to review re-submitted Final EIR
3/25/2010	Release Agency responses
3/29 – 4/8/2010	QA/QC review period
4/12/2010	Finish QA/QC review (including addressing any additional comments in house by Christine Cox's team)
4/13/2010	Final check of FEIR by Christine Cox
4/15/2010	FEIR to Ross Chittenden for final signature
4/26/2010	Final Book items due for May CTC Meeting
5/19/2010	CTC Meeting in Sacramento