

**NORTH COUNTY CORRIDOR  
TRANSPORTATION EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**ITEM: 4a**

**SUBJECT:**

Project Updates

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Discussion Only

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Not determined

**DISCUSSION:**

Jacob's staff provides the following updates:

Risk – No new risks have been identified and the current risks for the traffic model to be used have been resolved and removed. The revised Risk plan will be distributed at the TAC meeting.

Public Outreach Update –

A Community Involvement Plan has been approved by Caltrans.

A Community Focus Group (CFG) has been created. The community group will be comprised of representatives of key community interests, for example, property owners, businesses, agriculture, environmental organizations, and other groups. The first meeting of the community group was held on Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 6:30 p.m., at the StanCOG Board Room, 1111 I Street, Suite 308, Modesto. Their roles and responsibilities, members, and first meeting agenda will be distributed at the TAC meeting.

Traffic Update –

Traffic data collection is complete. However, based on a request from the project team new roadway volumes were collected at ten (10) locations to identify the potential volume changes from recent land use/traffic circulation changes. A new analysis has been performed at these locations. A Draft Existing Conditions Report has been submitted to Caltrans for review.

Environmental Update –

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are in progress and include the establishment of a Draft Purpose and Need Statement and the development and initial screening of alternatives. Once a clear purpose and need statement is developed and possible actions to address need are established, the potential transportation system alternatives to meet the travel needs will be refined.

A draft alternative methodology report has been prepared and is being reviewed by Caltrans. The purpose of this report is to outline the approach to be undertaken in identifying alternatives for additional study in the NCC EIS/EIR. The screening process includes identification of alternatives. This includes a first screening that focuses on determining if the alternatives will meet the year 2030 traffic demands on State Route 108 (SR 108) in northern Stanislaus County, California. The screening process also includes evaluation of whether there are any major engineering considerations that would affect the safety or function of the facility, as well as a second screening that includes a quantitative assessment of how well the alternatives would meet the purpose and need and a comparison of the operational function and impacts of the alternatives. The approach has been developed to satisfy the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), acting as the delegated NEPA agency pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327, in cooperation with the North County Corridor Transportation Expressway Authority (NCCTEA), will comply with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines for implementing NEPA, and related environmental policies and regulations, as well as comply with the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference (SER).

#### 6002 Process

A kick-off meeting was held on December 1, 2010 for the Participating or Cooperating Agencies on this project. Letters to 19 regulatory agencies soliciting their interest were sent on September 24, 2010. In attendance include:

- California Department of Fish & Game
- San Francisco Public Utility Commission (Hetch Hetchy)
- Modesto Irrigation District
- Oakdale Irrigation District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Army Corps of Engineers, and
- Local agency representatives

After a presentation of the project and progress to date, a tour of the project site was conducted. A map displaying all the alternatives that are currently under evaluation was presented and will be distributed at the TAC meeting.

#### “Permission to Enter” (PTE)

Letters for over 1000 residents/property owners have been prepared to obtain access to private property for environmental study for the areas that have been defined for spring-time surveys. These were mailed on December 9, 2010. The approach for identifying parcels for technical field surveys that will be done in early 2011 is focused largely on the alignments in less developed areas, which are more likely to contain potential habitat for sensitive natural resources, such as wetlands, vernal pools, and special status species. Survey timing for many of these resources is tied to the rainy season. Consequently, at this time, the “Permit-to-Enter” letters are not being sent to property owners along all the alignments that were shown to the public (or all alignment options suggested by the public) at the September 8 and September 13, 2010, scoping meetings. The technical specialists will include biologists, botanists, archaeologists, historians, air/water/noise specialists, and others.