

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 10 DIRECTOR

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January 14, 2014

Mr. Matt Machado
NCC TEA Authority Manager
Stanislaus County Public Works
1716 Morgan Rd
Modesto, CA 95358

File: 10-0S800
North County Corridor

Dear Mr. Machado,

The intent of this letter is to document the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) understanding and commitment to cooperatively work with Stanislaus County to deliver a project that will accommodate regional east-west traffic and improve north-south connectivity in Stanislaus County and southern San Joaquin County. The project needs to be compatible with the Freeway Route Adoption from McHenry to east of Albers Road and a multi-lane controlled access highway from the end of the Route Adoption limits until it connects with SR120.

Caltrans supports the strategy approved by the Project Development Team (PDT) on June 5, 2013, to pursue the North County Corridor (NCC) project as an Expressway between McHenry Ave. and the SR120/SR108 connection east of Oakdale. However, as the project is still early in the project development process, further traffic operations analysis will need to occur. At this time, it appears that the proposal to re-scope the project from freeway to expressway and revise the project limits will continue to meet the need and purpose of the project. The outcome of future traffic operations studies will need to revalidate the revised scope.

The proposed redefinition of the project meets the FHWA regulations outlined in the three general principles guiding the development of proposed highway projects in compliance with NEPA:

1. Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters or a broad scope.
2. Independent utility or independent significance
3. Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonable foreseeable transportation improvements

The updated traffic forecasting analysis approved by Caltrans in June 2013 is supportive of

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having the logical termini for the western terminus located in the vicinity of McHenry Ave, rather than at SR99. As the project moves forward throughout the project development process, the PDT will need to evaluate the traffic needs and impacts, and document the results and recommendations in the Traffic Operations Report. This will ensure an acceptable level of service for this facility during the 20-year design life and affirm the concept of building an expressway instead of a freeway for the entire length of the proposed project.

It is advised that a letter be sent to all of the participating agencies notifying them of the recent changes and that these changes be presented to the public through a public information meeting(s). Additionally, the alternative screening analysis should be refreshed to ensure that the alternatives carried forward meet the purpose and need.

As stated in previous correspondence from Carrie Bowen, dated October 24, 2012, Caltrans requests your commitment and support for an access controlled, capacity improvement project for SR 219 from SR 99 to McHenry Avenue in your Tier 1 Regional Transportation Plan.

Caltrans looks forward to continuing our partnership with the North County Corridor Transportation Expressway Authority to develop and implement a much needed solution for an alternative highway around the communities of Riverbank and Oakdale.

Please contact the Project Manager, Joy Pinne at (209) 948-7854 if you have questions or would like to setup a meeting to discuss.

Sincerely,


AMARJEET S. BENIPAL
Acting District 10 Director

Cc: Dinah Bortner
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