

Memorandum

To: Chair and Commissioners

Date: February 14, 2003

From: Diane C. Eidam

File:
Reference Number 5.2
Information

Ref.: STATUS REPORT OF THE TRI-COUNTY (AMADOR, ALPINE, CALAVERAS) PARTNERSHIP

This is an information item from Amador, Alpine and Calaveras counties providing a status report on the Tri-County partnership efforts. The report will include a discussion of the developments regarding the Department of Transportation and the Tri-County partners' efforts to achieve project delivery on four State highway projects funded with pooled State Transportation Improvement Program funds and the status of another agreement that will extend the partnership to two additional State highway projects over the next ten years.

The four State highway projects to be discussed are:

- Calaveras SR 4 Bypass, Angels Camp
- Calaveras SR 4 Passing Lane
- Amador SR 88 Passing Lanes, Hams & Cooks Stations
- Amador SR 49 Bypass

The "new start" State highway projects to be discussed are:

- Calaveras "Wagon Trail" on SR 4
- Amador 88 Pine Grove Corridor Improvements

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TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**
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692 Marshall Avenue, Unit A
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February 10, 2003

Diane Eidam
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Tri-County Partnership Status Report

Dear Ms. Eidam:

The Tri-County partnership would take this opportunity to express its thanks to you and the California Transportation Commission for your ongoing attention to and support of the Tri-County STIP projects. Attached please find a summary status report concerning the four state highway projects being delivered by Caltrans with our "pooled" STIP funds.

Thanks in part to the CTC's attention, all projects are moving through the delivery process on schedule. The Tri-Counties are encouraged by this progress. The attached report indicates that we have begun to move forward on another agreement (MOU II) that would extend our partnership to two more state highway projects over the next ten years.

We look forward to our opportunity to discuss the valuable lessons we are learning and the progress being made during the CTC meeting on February 27, 2003.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
George Dondero, II, Executive Director
Calaveras Council of Governments

Original signed by
Leonard Turnbeaugh, Executive Secretary
Alpine County Local Transportation Commission

Original signed by
Charles F. Field, Executive Director
Amador County Transportation Commission

TRI-COUNTIES PROGRESS REPORT
TO THE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2003

CURRENT TRI-COUNTY MOU PROJECTS (MOU I)

Amador 49 Bypass of Sutter Creek and Amador City

- Environmental clearance (PA&ED) was achieved on April 8, 2002.
- Plans, specifications, estimates (PS&E) were complete on September 18, 2002.
- Right-of-way certification was achieved on December 20, 2002.
- The project will be ready-to-list and ready for its construction allocation in time for the California Transportation Commission's meeting on April 3, 2003.
- The cities of Sutter Creek and Amador City and the County of Amador have been at work since January 2001 on cooperative agreements for relinquishment of old Highway 49 after the Bypass is built. These Cooperative Agreements and related Controlled Access Highway Agreements are in final form and should be executed by the cities, County, and State as soon as they pass through Caltrans Headquarters legal division.

Highway 88 Passing Lanes Near Cooks Station and Hams Station

- Environmental clearance (PA&ED) for the passing lanes projects was achieved in June, 2002.
- Plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) and right-of-way certification is scheduled for June, 2003 pending approval of necessary easements by the U.S. Forest Service (El Dorado National Forest).
- This project is scheduled for ready-to-list and its construction allocation before December, 2003.
- The USFS, FHWA, and Caltrans were in disagreement regarding whether or not to mitigate the visual impacts generated by the passing lanes projects. The project's approved EA/EIR documents impacts to visual resources and requires mitigation, but is not specific about the mitigation to be provided. The El Dorado National Forest has requested that mitigation be the improvement of a scenic vista on Highway 88 near the passing lanes project. Caltrans and the FHWA could not construct or provide funding for the scenic vista from the passing lanes project budget without violating State or federal policies. On February 19, 2003, the Amador County Transportation Commission will likely vote to obligate its 2000/01 TEA funds (\$115,315) to the El Dorado National Forest for the scenic vista project. All parties have agreed that this contribution of local TEA will enable the passing project to move forward on schedule.

SR4 Angels Camp Bypass

- Environmental clearance on June 28, 2002.
- Work has been proceeding on design and Right-of-Way acquisition.
- The Tri-Counties team has expressed concern over delay in completing legal review of cooperative agreements for relinquishment of a section of SR4. Much effort went into negotiating terms of these agreements, and the partners are anxious to execute them. At a meeting on February 5, 2003, Caltrans management was optimistic for completion of legal review before Feb. 27.
- No work on the project has been delayed due to lack of executed cooperative agreements.

SR4 Passing "Arnold" Passing Lane

- Environmental clearance on April 4, 2002.
- Design (PS&E) and Right-of-Way certification completed December 18, 2002.
- Has been submitted to the Commission for an allocation vote on April 3, 2003 for construction.

- This project is located near the 6500-foot elevation, and must therefore be constructed during the short summer season when snow is absent.
- It was scheduled for an allocation vote in January, but was delayed due to the current freeze on allocations by the Commission.
- If the allocation vote is not obtained in April, it is likely construction will spill over into summer of 2004, incurring a potential cost increase.

“NEW-START” TRI-COUNTY PROJECTS (MOU II)

Calaveras - “Wagon Trail” on SR4:

- CTC programmed \$1.178 million. Made allocation for PA&ED in the 2002 STIP.
- After one Project Development Team meeting, Calaveras COG decided to take on lead agency status for the project, as allowed under Proposition 35.
- As required by Caltrans policy, we submitted a draft cooperative agreement for legal review. A similar agreement was drafted for Amador’s Pine Grove Corridor project.
- Although the time to complete legal review is frustrating (over 3months), we are expecting to see this work completed shortly so that work may proceed.

Amador 88 Pine Grove Corridor Improvements

- CTC programmed \$1.78 million for PA&ED for 2002/03 in the 2002 STIP.
- Alpine County provided RPA and PPM funds to the Amador County Transportation Commission who has completed a series of “town-hall” meetings in Pine Grove to more thoroughly define the range of alternatives to be analyzed through the PA&ED effort. Thus far, the community is split between two bypass options (one north and one south) and a third “context sensitive” alternative, widening of existing SR 88 through town. Only three votes (out of more than 100) were cast for the no-project alternative. An allocation for PA&ED funding will be submitted for the CTC’s April 3 agenda.

Conclusion

Both Amador and Calaveras Counties have retained private consultants to act as project managers on all Tri-County projects. These individuals have proved invaluable in keeping the projects moving forward, and are appreciated by staff in the Department as well. This collaborative approach continues to build a sense of teamwork and success among all players. With two projects ready for construction, two more moving toward that goal in 2003 and 2005, and two more ready to begin environmental work this year, we look forward to execution of a second MOU between the Tri-Counties.