

Draft MINUTES

MON 156 West Corridor Project: Community Advisory Group

**April 23, 2008, 5:30-7:30 PM
Castroville Library, Castroville CA**

Attending

Community Advisory Group:

Carolyn Anderson
Brad Houston
Leonard Rabe
Arthur McLoughlin
Jacqueline Simon
Bill Theyskens
Mark Verbonich
Jerry Gifford
Sig Matt
Margie Kay
Gary DeAmaral

Daniel Lum (Caltrans Traffic)
Joseph Londono (Caltrans Traffic)
Dave Silberberger (Caltrans Project Management)
Robert Davis (Caltrans Project Management)
Debbie Hale, (Transportation Agency of Monterey County)
Don Bachman, (Transportation Agency of Monterey County)
Lou Hexter (MIG)
Paul Rosenbloom (MIG)
Gui Shearin (Parsons)

Agencies and consultants:

Kay Goshgarian (Caltrans Environmental)
Alex Correa (Caltrans Design)
Gilberto Baca (Caltrans Design)

A reminder: CAG members please sign the check-in sheet for each meeting.

Community Advisory Group members, representatives from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), MIG, Inc. (consulting firm) and members of the general public attended the meeting. Lou Hexter of MIG facilitated the meeting. The project team provided a packet containing the proposed agenda and project overview materials to the Community Advisory Group members. The complete contents of the packet, as well as minutes from this meeting, will be posted on the project website, hosted by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County: http://www.tamcmonterey.org/programs/hwyproj/hwy156_CAG.html. The following topics were addressed during the meeting.

1. Lou asked for comments from members and public. Lou also introduced Paul Rosenbloom of MIG as the new associate assigned to this project. He noted that the project website has been updated since the last meeting in January.
2. Traffic Analysis-Daniel Lum, Caltrans Traffic
 - Level of Service is the measure of the operating conditions within the traffic flow. Conditions include speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver. Roadway widths, presence of shoulders, drivers (tourists versus local) affect level of service.
 - Level of Service A is the best; Level of Service F is the worst.
 - Two types of Level of Service are presented: one for mainline and one for intersections.
 - Level of Service for intersections influenced by merging and travel speeds on mainline.

- Must compare alternatives as part of the traffic analysis: Alternative 11, the existing State Route 156 will become a frontage road. Alternative 12, lanes on new alignment and new interchange at Cathedral Oaks Road. The U.S. Route 101/State Route 156 interchange will be the same for both alternatives.
- Passenger car equivalent is used to standardize the traffic count and complete the analysis. This represents the number of passenger cars that each truck or bus is equivalent to under specific conditions.
- Length of roadway segment is used for calculation of traffic analysis.
- July, August 2005 traffic counts used for the traffic analysis. Counts were taken on weekday, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Sunday counts from 1-3PM were the highest.
- Calculation for U.S. Route 101-analysis shows weaving issues and need for improvements
- Traffic analysis takes into account the no-build 20 years in future, for this project 2036. Conditions are worst for no-build: in 20 years the level of service is F. The 156 West Corridor project is being built for 2036 traffic.
- Traffic analysis includes Castroville Boulevard improvements. Castroville Community Plan includes improvements to Castroville Boulevard with regard to Route 156 West Corridor project. Additionally improvements are to provide access to Commuter Train Station Opportunity Areas and extend Castroville Boulevard to Blackie Road.
- Level of Service A for the frontage road (the existing State Route 156 for alternative 11). Level of Service A means no traffic conflict for frontage road because it will be used by local traffic.
- Alternative 11 mainline for regional traffic. [what does this mean?]
- U.S. Route 101 current Level of Service E between State Route 156 and Vierra Canyon Road. If nothing is done, in 2036 the United States Route 101/State Route 156 interchange reduces to failure, with estimated Level of Service F. Regional and local traffic could come to a standstill.
- Improvements such as adding an arterial east of U.S. Route 101 and reconfiguring the U.S. Route 101/State Route 156 interchange, Level of Service would be C or D in 2036. Adding the arterial separates regional and local traffic.
- Relationship of Red Barn intersection and southbound United States Route 101-affects traffic one mile beyond the U.S. Route 101/State Route 156 interchange.
- Traffic analysis assumes U.S. Route 101 ties back to two lanes. Still have congestion problems with two lanes.
- Operational analysis for Alternative 12 is similar to Alternative 11 because frontage road does not affect traffic numbers. Alternative 12 and Alternative 11 the same for U.S. Route 101/State Route 156 interchange.

3. Toll Road Feasibility-Gui Shearin, Parsons

At the January 23, 2008 meeting, CAG member requested information about toll roads as other potential funding sources for the Route 156 West Corridor study.

- Parsons has assessed revenue potential of toll roads for Mid-State Toll Road in the San Francisco Bay Area, Bucharest-Constanta Motorway in Romania, Adams Avenue at Interstate 15 in Ogden, Utah, and State Route 316 in Georgia from Atlanta to Athens.
- Must consider spillover traffic for the existing road under Alternative 11 for the Route 156 West Corridor project.
- Difficult to fund projects with only toll money because of inflation and obtaining initial private financing (bank loans).
- People tend to have a negative perception about tolls.
- Legislation is needed because the Route 156 West Corridor project is in the jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone-must have Coastal Commission approval and local and regional general and transportation plans must support a toll road.

- Potential conflict with the sales tax increase and toll collection—perception of paying twice for road.
- Need to estimate how much money will be collected from toll in order to determine financial feasibility—do this by determining the Average Annual Daily Traffic.
- Currently the Average Annual Daily Traffic State Route 156 is 30,000; however traffic mix is unknown. Future estimates 36,000 in 2016 and 44,000 in 2036.
- Collect toll by electronic methods (Electronic Toll Collection, or ETC); to avoid operational problems and space (right of way) required on State Route 156 for conventional toll gates.
- The toll approach would work for commuters who sign up; existing FasTrak tags would help.
- Would need video toll collection for infrequent users, such as tourists. Collection can be problematic for rental cars and out-of-state vehicles; there could be a loss in revenue from this.
- Must determine how much to charge. For revenue estimate, assume that base toll would be \$1.20 for ETC and \$2.50 for non-ETC.
- Assuming \$1.00 net toll per vehicle would yield \$130 to \$160 million in funding at 100% collection of toll, with no exemptions (assuming you are collecting toll coming and going).
- Capital costs for Alternative 11, \$380 million, and Alternative 12, \$405 million.
- Transportation Agency of Monterey County is focusing on sales tax for project revenue.
- Federal government may already be heading toward alternative funding for transportation so California would be looking at toll roads for other areas, not just the Route 156 West Corridor project.

4. Investment Plan for Transportation Sales Taxes in Monterey County-Debbie Hale Transportation Agency of Monterey County

- The half-cent sales tax would raise nearly \$1 billion in revenues for transportation projects over 25 years.
- New local revenues will also help secure an estimated \$800 million in state and federal matching funds and regional developer fees.
- Projects will be prioritized: The Route 156 West Corridor project is in the first tier and is the largest project in Monterey County.
- Proposed funding allocation: 50% safety and congestion relief, 25% local roads, 20% transit, 3% bicycle/pedestrian and 2% smart growth (in-fill development) and habitat (ie. Elkhorn Slough Foundation).
- Citizens Oversight Committee is included as one of the taxpayer safeguards.
- Transportation Agency of Monterey County initiated interactive meetings with Monterey County community leaders, the general public, environmental groups, social justice organizations, agriculture and business leaders, trade unions, taxpayers association, and transit advocates for investment plan input.
- Booklet was distributed to meeting attendees with detailed information about the investment plan.
- Cities to vote on ordinances (initiated early April 2008). All first readings should be completed by end of May 2008.

5. Questions

- **Q.** Who will maintain the existing State Route 156 when the project is completed? **A.** The existing State Route 156 will be relinquished to the County of Monterey. Caltrans most likely will rehab the facility before turning it over to the County. The county will then be responsible for maintenance of the facility.

- **Q.** Does traffic on Berta Canyon Road influence traffic on U.S. Route 101? **A.** Based on the traffic analysis, the traffic on Berta Canyon Road does not make a difference in the traffic numbers on U.S. Route 101..
- **Q.** What does Prunedale Bypass do for Level of Service in the U.S. Route 101 corridor? **A.** Not known since this project is not in the Transportation Agency of Monterey County's 25-year transportation plan.
- **Q.** Why are we considering two alternatives for the environmental impact report? **A.** Under the California Environmental Quality Act, more than one alternative to the no-build must be evaluated for a project.
- **Q.** Can you have check points so you will not have spillover onto frontage road? **A.** People would divert to other routes assuming they are not one-time visitors.
- **Q.** Is it possible to start with lower toll cost at the beginning and increase later as traffic volumes increase? **A.** Would proportionally collect less money because of higher startup costs; would not be able to collect much money up-front. Lenders would be cautious and concerned about growth rates.
- **Q.** Would toll slow traffic down? **A.** Electronic toll would probably not slow down traffic, but non-electronic toll collection would because cars would need to stop and deposit tolls.
- **Q.** Would the hospitality industry fight the toll road? **A.** Possibly. Hospitality industry is behind the sales tax at this time. The industry is looking to the November election and success of sale tax initiative for funding before commenting on alternative funding methods. Visitors are sensitive to rates and fees such as tolls.
- **Q.** If sales tax measure fails, would we still have revenue from developer fees? **A.** The developer impact fees are not tied to the sales tax (access the Transportation Agency of Monterey County website listed on page 1 of these meeting notes for details about developer fees). It is important to stress that growth pays for growth and sales tax pays for transportation. The developer impact fees are to start before the sales tax.

4. Facility and meeting dates

- Next meeting is September 24, 2008, 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Castroville Library.
- Topic will be overall status of the Route 156 West Corridor project.

Meeting adjourned.