



City of San Luis Obispo

Public Works Department • 919 Palm Street • San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3218

March 6, 2012

Bimla Rhinehart, Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
Mail Station 52
1120 N Street, Room 2221
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: US 101/Los Osos Valley Road Interchange Programming Advancement

Dear Ms. Rhinehart,

This letter requests your support for advancing STIP construction funding for the US 101/Los Osos Valley Road Interchange project as requested by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG). The current year of construction funding is the 2014/15 fiscal year; however the project will be ready for construction well in advance of that date. The City of San Luis Obispo has officially requested advancement of the funds to the 2012/13 fiscal year. The right of way and construction funding for the project was originally approved in the 2008 STIP cycle but was delayed in 2010 due to over commitment of the STIP statewide.

This highly complex project has been under development for a number of years and continues progressing rapidly through the Caltrans process. PS&E is anticipated to be approved in November of this year. SLOCOG, the City and County of San Luis Obispo have all allocated scarce local funds to keep this project moving forward. During very difficult fiscal times the City of San Luis Obispo alone has borne considerable costs – **advancing over \$10 million dollars** - to make progress on this important regional highway project without the support of state or federal funds.

The City is the lead agency in developing (and funding) these critical improvements including securing the various Caltrans approvals and producing construction documents. This arrangement should be considered as a model for local funding and programming partnerships on regional transportation improvements as it provides for advancement of important infrastructure projects without early commitment of State funding. I understand from the STIP hearings held in February that there is limited funding in the early years of the STIP, but I am hopeful that this will be a project to make an exception for.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jay D. Walter
Public Works Director
City of San Luis Obispo



F.A.Q. Sheet

Los Osos Valley Road Interchange Improvements

1. Why are improvements to the L.O.V.R. Interchange needed?

Traffic at the interchange is approaching gridlock at certain times of the day and conditions will continue to deteriorate without improvement to the interchange. Improvements to the interchange will reduce traffic congestion, increase bicycle and pedestrian safety, and enhance much needed circulation to a major transportation corridor within the City and region.

2. How will the improvements benefit the region?

The LOVR interchange serves as a major access point for Morro Bay, Baywood Park, Los Osos, State parks and the SLO County Regional Airport. In fact, 40% of interchange traffic is generated by persons who reside outside of SLO. Along with meeting day-to-day regional needs, interchange expansion will greatly improve regional emergency evacuation.

3. How has the City “stepped up to the plate” in support of the project?

- Improving the interchange is firmly anchored in the Regional Transportation Plan and the City's General Plan, with both the Circulation and Land Use Elements calling for its expansion.
- In 2007, 2009 and again in 2011 the City Council designated the L.O.V.R. Interchange improvements one of its highest community priorities as part of its Major Goals.
- The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments has placed the project as one of its highest priority projects in the current RTIP.
- The City has backed-up this priority by taking bold steps to fund and design the interchange improvements, with a commitment to raise local funds equal to at least 50% of the estimated \$30 million cost.
- The City has established a special funding district that has already generated \$5.0 million for the project in addition to committing community-wide traffic impact fees (TIF). Over \$10 million in improvements and project development have been completed to date.

4. What has been done to make the project “ready to go”?

A lot! Environmental work has already been completed (2011), and Caltrans has agreed to a strategy that avoids building an entirely new interchange. Detailed design work for the expansion has been locally funded in the City's Budget (\$2.5 million) and 60% review by Caltrans *is complete*.

5. Next Steps

- Seek additional 2012 STIP/RTIP allocation of \$1.2 Million.
- Seek to advance the construction funds from 2014-15 to 2012-13
- Complete ROW – City has Advanced \$1.2 Million
- Complete Design (November 2012) to be “Shelf Ready”
- Continue to seek outside grant sources for construction funding

CALAVERAS COUNTY FARM BUREAU
247 Hwy 12 #30
Valley Springs, CA 95252

March 6, 2012

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
Government Center
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249

Calaveras Council of Governments Board of Directors
P.O. Box 280
San Andreas, CA 95249

RE: Wagon Trail Project (Hwy 4 Realignment)

Dear Supervisors and Directors:

Calaveras County Farm Bureau is opposed to choosing an alignment such as the proposed northern alignment (Alignment B) that would vary widely from the existing Hwy 4 route, and that would maintain the old alignment so it could be used for a biking, hiking and equestrian trail. An alignment that doesn't closely follow the existing route, where possible, only contributes to further fragmentation of the agricultural lands in the area and a trail with public access would seriously threaten the economic viability of these lands and would expose landowners to increased and unnecessary liability, vandalism, trespass and fire danger.

Farm Bureau policy states that "All changes in use and/or ownership of rights-of-way must honor the reversionary rights and revert to original parcels." Whatever route is chosen, the old right-of-way must revert back to the adjoining landowners.

Thank you for your attention to our concern.

Sincerely,



Toni Ann Fischer, President
Calaveras County Farm Bureau

cc: Tom Garcia, Calaveras County Public Works Director
Laurel Janssen, California Transportation Commission Assoc. Deputy Director
Michael Hutchinson, Design Manager Calif. Dept. of Transportation
Kristen Olsen, California State Assembly, 25th District
Chris Scheuring, California Farm Bureau Federation Associate Counsel

Monterey County is the lead agency for the Route 68 project at San Benancio. It is the Highway 68 Coalition's understanding that this project at San Benancio was underbid by the contractor, Top Grade Construction, and that the completion date has passed, and at this time a completion date may be uncertain.

PPNO 1813A Corral de Tierra, has significant issues and we contend that it is not ready for being put in the STIP funding request. Some of the issues and reasons why, are the following:

- 1) The environmental review is incomplete. Monterey County's consultant Wood Rogers is preparing an environmental review document. It is incomplete at this time. For one reason, according to Wood Rogers, is it requires reformatting.
- 2) Because the environmental review is incomplete, environmental review has not been circulated for agency, department, or to the public for comment. The review process under CEQA is incomplete.
- 3) A Project Study Report (PSR) for Corral de Tierra expired in October 2009 per CalTrans, District 5 signature
- 4) There have been significant changes to the immediate area on Highway 68 at Corral de Tierra since the PSR and its expiration in October 2009. Some of the changes are the following:
 - a) A fourth leg to the intersection at SR-68 at Corral de Tierra serving a church was installed
 - b) A residential road at the site now serves five residences, and includes horse boarding at one residence with a barn. This road was expected to be closed and tied in with the fourth leg of the intersection, but has been approved to continue access on SR-68 at the PPNO 1813A site.
 - c) On February 7, 2012, the County Board of Supervisors approved a 100,000 sq. ft. shopping center on 11-acres, at the intersection of SR-68 and Corral de Tierra. This approval and its EIR have been sued with the suit filed in Monterey County Superior Court on March 6, 2012. It is Case Number M116436.
 - d) A California Tiger Salamander Study on this 11-acre parcel immediately next to this PPNO 1813A SR-68 at Corral de Tierra site has not been completed. According to California Fish & Game, the shopping center applicant's consultant failed to follow protocol. Studies are ongoing during this current years rain cycle. The surrounding area is habitat to CTS and RLF in the nearby Corral de Tierra Creek
- 5) A proposed Highway 68 at Corral de Tierra roadway project design is admittedly only 35% complete. Design alternatives, including design alternative suggestions by the Highway 68 Coalition have not been published for review.

Page 4

referred to as "commuter capacity enhancement" in conjunction with the San Benancio project. Any capacity enhancement has not been analyzed for growth inducement at this PPNO 1813A site.

This same 01/01/10 PPNO 1813A DOT Project Programming Request states that Project Benefits will be:

"Project Benefits

Reduced congestion and delay through the intersection area. Potential reduction of rear-end accidents due to additional deceleration length and storage in the left turn pocket(s) in the median of SR-68."

We've seen no proof or statistics showing it is unsafe now. A new significantly longer turn-pocket was created for the driveway of the five residential houses after the last new asphalt overlay of the intersection in 2011. As a result of this, the turn-pocket for Corral de Tierra Road off of SR-68 was shortened. The former Monterey County Public Works contact, as lead agency, for the project offered to connect this five residential home private driveway with the private driveway of the nearby Cypress Church, both on private property, then told neighbors that the County didn't currently have the State funds to do this.

The Highway 68 Coalition would like this letter to become part of the administrative record. We fear the CTC may not be getting a current full story from Monterey County. CalTrans, District 5, in San Luis Obispo is some distance away from us. The Highway 68 Coalition asks that this \$1.7 Million earmarked for Corral de Tierra be removed from the STIP, at least at this time, for reasons outlined above. Environmental analysis of the issues outlined above has not been done. State and County Departments and Agencies, as well as the public have not had an opportunity to comment on an incomplete environmental document, including project description, plans, and alternatives.

Thank you,

Mike Weaver
Chair, The Highway 68 Coalition

c.c.

Caltrans Scenic Highway Experts

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