

REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT	MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Authorize Chairman to Sign Letter of Support for Buckhorn Project	12-14-04	6

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Agency authorize the Chairman to sign the attached letter of support for the Buckhorn Grade Improvement Project.

SUMMARY

Caltrans, District 2, has requested regional letters of support for the Buckhorn Grade Improvement Project to help them negotiate with Caltrans Headquarters to secure future Interregional State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds.

DISCUSSION

For the last five years, Caltrans has been preparing a comprehensive environmental document for the Buckhorn Project, currently estimated for completion in 2007. In 1998, the Shasta County RTPA approved \$150,000 in STIP funding to prepare these documents, then estimated to cost \$1.5 million (since increased to \$5.5 million). At the time, it was assumed that the total project cost would be \$96 million, with Humboldt, Trinity, and Shasta County's contributing 5%, 5%, and 10%, respectively, and Caltrans providing the remaining 80%. The most recent Caltrans estimate for the entire Buckhorn project is \$120 million. A Project status summary is attached.

Caltrans funding is from the STIP Interregional Program. These are California Transportation Commission (CTC) discretionary funds apportioned for Caltrans facilities. County funds are from the STIP Regional Program and count against the portion of the STIP under RTPA discretion. Regional STIP shares, when available, can be used on Caltrans or local transportation facilities.

As part of the 2006 or 2008 STIP cycle - whenever new funds are expected to become available - Caltrans, District 2, will work with Caltrans Headquarters to determine which Interregional projects or project phases can be programmed in the STIP. As in the past, when the Buckhorn environmental phase was funded, Caltrans Headquarters will be looking for regional support.

Since STIP funding has changed dramatically since 1998, it is premature to make a specific financial commitment of our regional share. It is, however, advantageous at this time to express our general support for the project to maximize the State's Interregional fund contribution.

Staff recommends that the Agency authorize the Chairman to sign the attached letter.

ALTERNATIVES

The Agency may elect to be more specific in the level of financial commitment. This is not recommended due to the many uncertainties of the Project cost and future STIP funds available to the region.

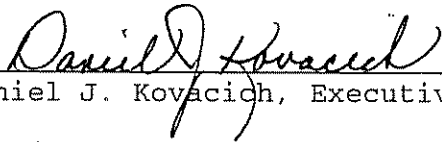
The agency may decline to send a letter at this time. This is not recommended because there is still the expectation that Caltrans can secure the vast majority of funds from the Interregional STIP program. There is also the outside hope that a small percentage of funding for the Project could be provided in an earmark when the six-year Federal transportation reauthorization is passed in the next year or two.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Technical Advisory Committee, including Caltrans District 2, has considered the letter and recommends approval.

FINANCING

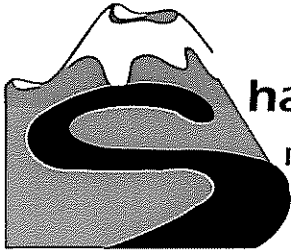
The attached letter provides no specific financial commitment of Regional STIP funds at this time, but may help Caltrans secure a high proportion of Interregional STIP funds. There is no fiscal impact.



Daniel J. Kovacich, Executive Officer

DJK/jac

Attachment: Draft Buckhorn Letter of Support
 Buckhorn Project Status Report



Shasta County

Regional Transportation
Planning Agency

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Daniel J. Kovacich, Executive Officer

December 14, 2004

Mr. Brian Crane, District Director
Caltrans, District 2
P.O. Box 496073
Redding, CA 96049-6073

Dear Mr. Crane:

The Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) would like to reaffirm our support for the Buckhorn Grade Realignment Project. This 7.7-mile-long stretch of State Highway 299 in western Shasta County, with its unstable slopes, sharp curves and steep grades, is the most substandard segment of the entire route. Caltrans has been studying alternate alignments through this rugged terrain for over 40 years.

The Shasta County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) has long recognized the need to modernize this section of highway by providing safer curve radii, safer and more frequent passing opportunities, and reduced maintenance costs. The RTP also acknowledges the project's importance in furthering Statewide goals to move larger trucks and goods between the coastal communities in Humboldt County, through Trinity County, to the greater Redding area and Interstate 5.

The RTPA will continue to partner with the California Department of Transportation (Department) as well as Humboldt and Trinity Counties to pursue full funding for the Buckhorn Grade project. In 1998, the Shasta County RTPA approved \$150,000 in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding toward the environmental document for this project, then estimated to cost \$1.5M. At the time, the total project cost was estimated at \$96 million and it was loosely assumed that Humboldt, Trinity, and Shasta County would contribute 5%, 5%, and 10%, respectively. Caltrans would provide the remaining 80%. Today's funding picture is dramatically different: The project cost has escalated to \$120 million and RTPA County shares are at a standstill.

Because a high percentage of the vehicular traffic and the majority of the truck traffic that will travel this highway is

interregional, the RTPA expects that the vast majority of funding will continue to come from the Interregional portion of the (STIP). The RTPA agrees that there is also a significant element of regional traffic that will use this highway, but must base financial contribution on future STIP funding in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the overall prioritized needs of Shasta County.

Currently, Shasta County has programmed nearly 80% of its RTIP allocation on the State Highway system. In addition, the State Route 44 at Stillwater Project will need to be programmed beyond the environmental phase and several other unprogrammed State Highway needs are high on our RTP priority list. Rather than focusing on a percentage of regional contribution to the Buckhorn Grade Project, we trust the Department will consider our entire track record in partnering on State Highway projects.

To move forward, it would be helpful if the Department provided us with a sense of the level of ITIP commitment, and the financial commitment expectations for the RTPAs. This will assist us in identifying overall project priorities when working with the Department, Humboldt County and Trinity County.

A project of this magnitude will take a great deal of cooperation with all the agencies involved. The Shasta County RTPA looks forward to working with the Department on this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Pat Kight, Chairman
Shasta County Regional Transportation
Planning Agency (MPO)

PK/DJK/jac

cc: John Jelich, Executive Secretary,
Trinity County Transportation Commission

Spencer Clifton, Executive Director,
Humboldt County Association of Governments



STIP Quarterly Progress Report December 2004



District 2

Buckhorn Grade

County: Shasta/Humboldt/Trinity		Project Manager: Chris Cummings		Project Description: Realign Roadway		Project Funding: IIP/RIP (RIP 46K HUM, 150K TRI, 150K SHA)	
Route: 299		E-Mail: chris_cummings@dot.gov		PM: 0.0/R7.4		Not Programmed	
EA: 02-270310		Phone: (530) 225-3495		KP: 0.0/R11.9			
PPNO(s): A0166A & B0166A		Current Phase: ENV					

Component	Programmed Funding		Unfunded Need	Budget	Expended as Oct 2004	Estimate at Complete (EAC)	Budget for Combined SB45 Components	% of Combined SB45 Budget Expended	EAC for Combined SB45 Components	% EAC of Budget
	RIP	IIP								
ENV	FY 99/00	FY 02/03	\$ 0	\$ 5,584,000	\$ 3,261,916	\$ 5,339,077	\$ 5,584,000	58%	\$ 5,339,077	96%
PS&E			Unknown							
R/W SUP			Unknown							
R/W CAP			Unknown							
CON SUP			Unknown							
CON CAP			Unknown							
TOTAL	496,000	5,088,000	Unknown	5,584,000						

Schedule	(Milestones)	% Complete	Project Status
PA&ED	8/16/2008	60%	Downscoped alternatives to provide phases currently being developed.
PS&E			Not Programmed
RWC			Not Programmed
ENV PERMITS			Not Programmed
CCA			Not Programmed

Six-Month History: Met with Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta Transportation Commission representatives regarding new scope and on or about existing alignment alternative. All concur on funding constraints and to proceed with new scope to allow fundable phases.

Six-Month Forecast: The estimated date to resume environmental studies is March 2005.

Shasta County RTPA Action: None at this time.

