MEMO

Date: March 2, 2006

To: Transportation and Communications Committee

From: Alan Bowser, Senior Regional Transportation Planner
(213-236-1843) or Bowser@scag.ca.gov

RE: Letter of Completion for I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS)

SUMMARY

The Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) Peer Review Group heard final presentations on January 19, 2006 for the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS). The Peer Review Group Members agreed that the study presented was complete (see Attachment A) and met the regional (2004 RTP) and federal requirements as outlined in TEA-21, and could thus be provided a Letter of Completion.

The Letter of Completion documents the Peer Review Group's agreement regarding the successful completion of the RSTIS process. This item confirms that SCAG will provide, under signature of the Director of Planning and Policy Department, a Letter of Completion according to adopted SCAG guidelines for the RSTIS Process.

BACKGROUND

Once the provision of the Letter of Completion has been agreed upon, the RSTIS (formerly MIS) Process is complete and draft/final environmental analysis can be initiated/completed, if required for the Locally Preferred Strategy and/or selected alternatives. If the locally preferred long-term strategy is different from the currently adopted 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (applicable in this case) it can be presented to the Regional Council for consideration as an amendment to the adopted Plan.

attachment

Note: The January 19, 2006 RSTIS Meeting Summary is available upon request (Al Bowser, 213-236-1843).

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Ventura County Transportation Commission: Keith Millhouse, Moorpark

January 19, 2006

Tony

Mr. Tony Grasso
Executive Director
SANBAG
1170 W. Third St., 2nd Flr.
San Bernardino, CA 92410-1715

Attn: Steve Smith

Subject: Letter of Completion for the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS)

Dear Mr. Grasso:

On November 29, 1993, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued final guidance on new regulations stemming from ISTEA passage. The Major Investment Study (MIS) is one of these ISTEA requirements.

Subsequently, TEA-21 removed the requirement for a "stand-alone" MIS, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued proposed new MIS regulations and guidance, expected to be finalized in 2001, and FHWA has advised observing existing MIS guidance until DOT guidelines are finalized.

SCAG's adopted 2004 RTP requires a transportation alternatives analysis study for all regionally significant transportation investments (RSTIS) that might utilize federal funds. Projects in this category are usually capacity adding transit and/or highway improvements.

In addition to an alternatives analysis, RSTIS components also include (1) determining purpose and need, (2) public involvement and (3) consultation among the MPO, county transportation commissions, transit operators, Caltrans, FHWA, FTA, State Resource Agencies and other investment stakeholders.

The range of alternatives considered in the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS) is sufficient to meet RSTIS Guidelines as adopted by SCAG's

Transportation and Communications Committee. SANBAG conducted an exemplary outreach process that provided adequate opportunities for public involvement. Moreover, numerous community-level and corridor-wide meetings including the RSTIS Peer Review Group facilitated public agency involvement and consultation during the study process.

On January 19, 2006 the *RSTIS Peer Review Group* met and determined that the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS) meets SCAG and FTA/FHWA requirements, by selecting a three-part, near and long-term locally preferred strategy. The two long-range project alternatives are ready to advance from the planning phase to the project development phase as necessary.

The final selection between Strategy D and the Strategies C & E Hybrid remains open at this time; it is expected that the final recommendation for long-term I-15 Corridor improvements will be developed by SANBAG, Caltrans, and SCAG staff following the completion of the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan (2007).

Attachment A [1] is a part of this LOC. It documents the Locally Preferred Strategy and describes next steps required to advance the near-term project recommendations.

This correspondence documents the RSTIS Peer Review Group findings that the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS) meets Metropolitan Planning Rules and is therefore granted this *Letter of Completion.* If you have any questions please contact me at (213) 236-1889 or Al Bowser at (213) 236-1843.

Sincerely,

Hasan Ikhrata
Director of Planning and Policy

[1] **Attachment A – I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy**

cc: Ty Schuiling, Director, SANBAG
Gary Green, Caltrans District 8
Alta-Grace Balmir, FTA/FHWA Los Angeles Metro Office
Robert Cady, FHWA
Alan Bowser/RSTIS File, SCAG

Attachment A

I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study (RSTIS) - Locally Preferred Strategy [1]
(SR-60 to Mojave River)

Attachment A documents the Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) in summary form and describes next steps agreed to by the study's project team, project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Project Policy Committee.

The LPS recommendation has three parts:

- Part 1: Implementation of Strategy B TDM/TSM elements
- Part 2: Reconfiguration of the 15/I-215 Interchange
- Part 3: Delineation of two future build strategies to advance for further project development

    1. Strategy D – Dedicated Truck Lanes (two lanes in each direction from SR-60 to the Mojave River)

        • Option A: With Provision for long combination vehicles (LCVs)
        • Option B: Without provision for LCVs

    2. Strategies C & E Hybrid - Reversible Managed Lanes with HOVLanes (two reversible lanes from SR-210 to US-395 and the addition of one HOV lane and one general-purpose lane in each direction south of SR-210 and north of US-395)

The final selection between Strategy D and the Strategies C & E Hybrid needs to remain open at this time, and it is expected that an additional recommendation for long term I-15 improvements will be developed by SANBAG, Caltrans, and SCAG staff following the completion of the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan.

[1] Pages 13 thru 19 of the I-15 Corridor Comprehensive Study's (RSTIS) Final Report/Executive Summary (December 2005) are included on the pages that follow and provide detailed descriptions of the 3-part Locally Preferred Strategy.

Attachment A

Executive Summary EXCERPT
January 19, 2006 RSTIS Meeting

I-15 Comprehensive Corridor Study

Final Report

Prepared for:

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SCAG)
SAN BERNARDINO ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS (SANBAG)
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS), DISTRICT 8

Prepared by:

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF QUADE & DOUGLAS, INC.

In Association with:

Cambridge Systematics
Tioga Group
Associated Engineers
Arellano Associates
Kimley-Horn and Associates
Economics & Politics, Inc.
Counts Unlimited

December 20, 2005

1.8 LOCALLY PREFERRED STRATEGY

Recommendations for the I-15 study corridor were formulated based on the detailed evaluation of the five strategies, as well as on the public outreach efforts described in the previous sections. The recommendations also acknowledge the status of ongoing planning initiatives by the cooperative client agencies for the study. The final recommendations to be carried forward into future phases of the project development process were based on consecutive consideration by the project team, project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Project Policy Committee. The Project Policy Committee consisted of the members of the SANBAG Plans and Programs Committee (PPC) plus several elected representatives from Riverside County.

The project team worked with the TAC throughout the analysis process to both inform and receive input on the analysis methodology and results. This process culminated in the April 11, 2005 TAC meeting where the project team's preliminary recommendations were presented to the TAC for consideration and were approved and supported by the TAC. These recommendations were then carried forward to the Project Policy Committee. At the April 20, 2005 PPC meeting, the Project Policy Committee reviewed and approved the project team and TAC's recommendations with one addendum; the inclusion of one additional general-purpose lane per direction north of US-395 and south of SR-210 in the Strategy C & E Hybrid option in addition to the HOV lanes identified for these segments.

The recommendation has three parts. These parts are as follows and are discussed in more detail in the subsections below:

- *Part 1: Implementation of Strategy B TDM/TSM elements*
- *Part 2: Reconfiguration of the 15/I-215 Interchange*

- *Part 3: Delineation of two future build strategies to advance for further project development*
  - *Strategy D – Dedicated Truck Lanes (two lanes in each direction from SR-60 to the Mojave River)*
    - *Option A: With Provision for long combination vehicles (LCVs)*
    - *Option B: Without provision for LCVs*
  - *Strategies C & E Hybrid - Reversible Managed Lanes with HOV Lanes (two reversible lanes from SR-210 to US-395 and the addition of one HOV lane and one general-purpose lane in each direction south of SR-210 and north of US-395)*

1.8.1 Recommendation Part 1: Implementation of Strategy B TDM/TSM Elements

The first part of the recommendation involves the implementation of Strategy B (TDM/TSM). Strategy B consists of travel demand management (TDM) and transportation system management (TSM) elements that address existing and future needs in the corridor. The implementation of such measures provides modest benefit to the corridor for a limited cost and with low impacts. For this reason, the elements of Strategy B should be implemented within the study corridor irrespective of any further capital improvements in the corridor, at a time when each of the elements is warranted based on operational need and cost-effectiveness.

1.8.2 Recommendation Part 2: Reconfiguration of I-15/I-215 Interchange

The results of the review of existing conditions on I-15 and findings from the public outreach efforts associated with the study both clearly identify the immediate need to reconfigure the I-15/I-215 interchange to better facilitate primary traffic movements. This interchange is recognized as the primary bottleneck in the corridor and improvement of the interchange was identified as the highest priority for this corridor.

Improvement of the I-15/I-215 interchange is the highest priority need in the corridor, and should be the focus of near-term project implementation efforts. As a first step, Caltrans is undertaking two State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects to provide better operations through this interchange area. The first project (recently completed) eliminated the lane drop for northbound traffic on the transition from I-15 onto the merged freeway with I-215. This additional lane becomes an auxiliary lane which exits the northbound freeway at Kenwood Avenue. The second project, currently in final design, provides an auxiliary lane from Kenwood Avenue north to Cleghorn Road.

To fully address this most critical need in the corridor, complete reconstruction of the interchange is needed. The new design should enable traffic remaining on I-15 to pass through the interchange without changing lanes, and should maintain the I-15 through lanes without a lane drop.

Currently there are no plans being developed for this type of improvement, though the recently-extended Measure I program includes a substantial amount of funding to improve this interchange. Major reconfiguration to the I-15/I-215 interchange could

proceed as a stand-alone project with independent utility and benefit regardless of the final LPS selection. With appropriate considerations, the reconfigured I-15/I-215 interchange could accommodate the future implementation of either candidate LPS along with the connection of Cajon Boulevard through the interchange.

SANBAG and Caltrans should consider promptly initiating appropriate project development efforts (a Project Study Report or a combination Project Study Report/Project Report) to identify more specifically the preferred design and estimated cost to improve this interchange to accommodate long-term traffic needs (including bypass lanes to remove trucks from the merge areas, and with the ability to fit either of the final two corridor improvement strategies). The preliminary cost estimates for the reconfiguration of the interchange range from approximately $60 million to $140 million depending on the extent of inclusion of ancillary improvements such as the truck bypass lanes.

At its meeting on December 12, 2005, the I-15 Technical Advisory Committee identified funding of the Project Study Report (PSR) or Project Study Report/Project Report (PSR/PR) for the I-15/I-215 interchange reconfiguration as a "primary goal for FY 2006-2007". If the PSR and PR are undertaken sequentially, it is expected that the preparation and approval of the PSR will take 1 year to 2 years to complete. Combining the PSR and PR has the potential for streamlining the project development efforts. These project development efforts will need to be considered in the context of the preparation of SANBAG's Measure I Strategic Plan.

With the completion of a PSR, funding could be provided to initiate the preparation of a Project Report and Environmental Documentation (PR/ED) in FY 2007-2008. This process will allow for the preparation of preliminary engineering for the interchange modification and the detailed evaluation of environmental impacts associated with the improvements. Since the proposed improvements are likely to be contained predominately within existing Caltrans rights-of-way, it is possible that the PR/ED could be completed in 12 months to 18 months leading to Final Design in FY 2009-2010.

The Final Design phase of the project would result in the preparation of detailed Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) for the interchange reconfiguration. These documents support the process for soliciting bids for the construction of the project and the completion of Final Design in FY 2010-2011 could allow construction to commence in FY 2011-2012. Completion of this project may take 2 years to 3 years depending of specific requirements for project phasing to allow traffic operations to be maintained during construction. Alternative construction delivery methods may also be appropriate for the I-15/I-215 interchange.

1.8.3 Recommendation Part 3: Advance Two Future Build Strategies for Further Evaluation and Project Development

The results of the alternatives analysis and public outreach highlighted the relative benefits and associated costs of implementing the various strategies previously identified. However, the findings of these efforts also highlighted contrasting results that require more detailed evaluation and assessment to delineate the most appropriate

improvement strategy for the corridor. For this reason, it is recommended that two future build strategies be advanced for further detailed evaluation and comparison as part of the project development process, ultimately leading to the identification of a locally preferred strategy: Strategy D (Dedicated Truck Lanes) and the Strategies C & E Hybrid (Reversible Managed Lanes with HOV Lanes).

Specifically, it is believed that the final selection between Strategy D and the Strategies C & E Hybrid needs to remain open at this time for the following reasons:

- Strategy D has an estimated cost range of $2.0 billion to $3.5 billion to implement. To be most effective, the dedicated truck lanes (Strategy D) should be part of a regional system. Yet there are multiple uncertainties concerning the feasibility and funding of the dedicated truck lanes. The regional truck lane system cannot be ruled out at this point nor can it be assumed to be feasible and fundable. A conclusion on the feasibility of the regional truck lane system will be reached as part of the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan (Action Plan). This effort will not be completed until late in calendar year 2006.

- The Strategies C & E Hybrid (reversible managed lanes) is feasible, fundable, and provides substantial benefits to both local and regional travelers. Strategy C & E has an estimated cost range of $632 million to $913 million to complete making it substantially lower in cost than Strategy D. However, it provides slightly less overall traffic benefit than Strategy D. The effectiveness and use of high occupancy vehicle lanes has been demonstrated in recent studies by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and SCAG. The HOV lanes are therefore included in this alternative to maintain regional HOV lane connectivity.

It is expected that an additional recommendation for long term I-15 improvements will be developed by SANBAG, Caltrans, and SCAG staff following the completion of the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan.

1.9 FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE LPS

A total of three financial strategies were evaluated in detail, one applicable to reversible managed lanes and the remaining two applicable to exclusive truck lanes. As a base assumption, the financial strategies attempted to self-finance the LPS to the extent possible by imposing tolls on the vehicles that use the new reversible managed or truck lanes, depending on which strategy is ultimately adopted. The three financial strategies evaluated are as follows:

1. **Combination HOT/HOV Lanes:** This alternative has two reversible managed high occupancy vehicle or toll-paying vehicle (HOT) lanes on I-15 from SR-210 to US-395. South of SR-210 and north of US-395, this alternative was analyzed as having one high occupancy vehicle only (HOV) lane in each direction. Tolls were assumed to be collected only on the reversible managed lanes portion.

2. **Truck Toll Lanes:** This alternative has two exclusive truck toll lanes in each direction for the entire length of the corridor from SR-60 to D Street. This alternative assumes Longer Combination Vehicles (LCVs) do not use the truck toll lanes. Two variations of this alternative were considered:
   a. Without Mojave River to Bear Valley Road segment on an elevated structure, and
   b. With Mojave River to Bear Valley Road segment on an elevated structure.
3. **LCV Toll Lanes:** From an engineering and design perspective, this alternative is similar to the Truck Toll Lanes alternative. However, from the financial perspective this strategy differs in that it assumes LCV trucks are able to use the truck toll lanes, but not the existing mixed-flow lanes. . This alternative also assumes non-LCV trucks continue to use the mixed-flow lanes, but do not use the truck toll lanes. For this alternative to be possible, additional investments would be required for infrastructure outside of this corridor for LCVs to reach I-15. The financial analysis does not include the cost implications of this additional infrastructure. Two variations of this alternative were considered:
   a. Without Mojave River to Bear Valley Road segment on an elevated structure, and
   b. With Mojave River to Bear Valley Road segment
   c. on an elevated structure.

Conclusions about each of these three financial strategies are as follows:

- **Combination HOT/HOV Lanes:** This financial strategy will not generate sufficient toll revenues to fully fund construction of the Strategies C and E Hybrid. At most $665 million or 59 percent of the $1.14 billion escalated construction cost (inflated to anticipated year of construction value) could be financed by leveraging the net revenue collected from HOT lane tolls. The remaining $470 million in construction costs would have to be funded through other federal, state and local sources.

  The construction cost for this strategy includes the sum of both reversible managed lanes and HOV lane improvements although only the managed lanes segments (US-395 to SR-138, SR-138 to I-215 and I-215 to SR-210) are revenue producing. If the cost of the managed lanes element is separated from the HOV lane component, the full construction cost of the reversible managed lanes (approximately $650 million) could be financed by leveraging the net revenue collected from tolls.

- **Truck Toll Lanes:** The financial analysis indicates that the annual revenue from truck lane tolls is similar in magnitude to the annual operating and maintenance cost for the truck lanes. Because of this unfavorable financial operating scenario, none of the $4.6 billion[1] escalated construction cost can be financed by leveraging the net toll revenue. Significant infusion of funding from federal, state and local sources or other types of non-toll user charges will be needed to make this project financially feasible.

[1] $5.3 billion if the Mojave River to Bear Valley Road elevated structure is included.

- **LCV Toll Lanes:** This financial analysis strategy will not generate sufficient toll revenues to fully fund construction of Strategy D, Dedicated Truck Lanes. At most $1.5 billion or 32 percent of the $4.6 billion construction cost of the LCV Lanes Alternative without the Mojave River to Bear Valley Road elevated structure could be financed by leveraging the net revenue collected from truck lane tolls. If the elevated structure is included, the cost goes up to $5.3 billion. About 28 percent of this cost can be covered with project-related debt instruments. The remaining $3.15 billion in construction costs ($3.8 billion with the elevated structure) would have to be funded through other federal, state and local sources or other types of non-toll user charges. It is important to note, however, that an effective LCV strategy would need to extend lanes for LCVs on I-15 from the Mojave River (the north end of the corridor for this study) to the Nevada State Line, so that the LCVs could continue through Nevada, Utah, and Colorado, to the extent possible. The costs of extending the lanes to the Nevada State Line are not included in the costs for this alternative.

1.10 Implementation Plan for the LPS

Selection of a Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS) for the I-15 Corridor establishes the long-term blueprint for meeting corridor transportation needs over the next 25-30 years. Achievement of this vision involves a multi-step process to plan, fund, design, and construct the various components of the overall strategy. Phased implementation is essential, since funding will be obtained incrementally over time and improvements are not immediately needed throughout the corridor.

The analysis of implementation issues culminated in the development of two action plans: one for the critical near-term improvements to the I-15/I-215 interchange, and one for the long-term corridor improvement process. Each action plan includes near-term steps and the responsible agency, followed by an overview of subsequent steps leading to ultimate implementation of the LPS. These action plans are summarized in the sub-sections below:

1.10.1 Near-Term Improvements Action Plan: I-15/I-215 Interchange

Next Steps:

1. Complete design of the SHOPP project (auxiliary lane from Kenwood Avenue to Cleghorn Road – anticipated to be completed in FY 2005-2006) – Caltrans
2. Construct auxiliary lane from Kenwood Avenue to Cleghorn Road (construction expected to commence in FY 2005-2006) – Caltrans
3. Conduct a PSR and PR/ED for the major interchange improvement (funding PSR identified as a primary goal for FY 2006-2007) – SANBAG and Caltrans.
4. Perform preliminary design and environmental clearance for improvements to Cajon Boulevard (potentially part of PR/ED for I-15/I-215 interchange) – SANBAG and County of San Bernardino.

Overview of subsequent steps leading to reconstruction of the interchange:

1. Identify funding for the I-15/I-215 interchange reconstruction – SANBAG and Caltrans,
2. Perform final design of I-15/I-215 interchange improvements – SANBAG and Caltrans.
3. Acquire right-of-way for I-15/I-215 interchange improvements – Caltrans.
4. Construct I-15/I-215 interchange improvements – Caltrans.
5. Identify funding for Cajon Boulevard improvements (connecting Cajon Boulevard through the I-15/I-215 interchange could potentially be part of the overall funding package for the I-15/I-215 interchange) – SANBAG and County of San Bernardino.
6. Perform final design of Cajon Boulevard improvements – County of San Bernardino.
7. Acquire right-of-way for Cajon Boulevard improvements – County of San Bernardino.
8. Construct Cajon Boulevard improvements – County of San Bernardino.

1.10.2 Long-Term Improvements Action Plan: I-15 Corridor Projects

Next Steps:

1. Based upon results of Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan, adopt the final LPS for the I-15 Corridor – SANBAG.
2. Request SCAG to include the final LPS in the 2008 RTP update.

Overview of Long-term Corridor Improvement Process:

1. Conduct PSRs for the corridor mainline improvements by segment: southern (SR-60 to SR-210), central (SR-210 to US-395), and northern (US-395 to Mojave River) – SANBAG and Caltrans. Include consideration of need for auxiliary lanes in design studies.
2. Identify funding for the corridor mainline improvements – SANBAG and Caltrans.
3. Conduct PR/EDs for the corridor mainline improvements by segment – SANBAG and Caltrans.
4. Perform final design of the corridor mainline improvements by segment – SANBAG and Caltrans.
5. Acquire right-of-way for corridor mainline improvements by segment – Caltrans.
6. Construct corridor mainline improvements by segment – Caltrans.

Overview of Ongoing TSM/TDM Strategy Implementation

1. Work with corridor cities to plan, design, and implement Intelligent Transportation Systems strategies for the corridor – SANBAG and Caltrans.
2. Work with the California Highway Patrol to identify opportunities and means to enhance enforcement through the corridor – SANBAG and Caltrans.
3. Identify opportunities and means to enhance freeway service patrol in the corridor – SANBAG.
4. Work with Victor Valley Transit and Omnitrans to identify opportunities and means to increase express transit service between the high desert and the Valley area – SANBAG.