

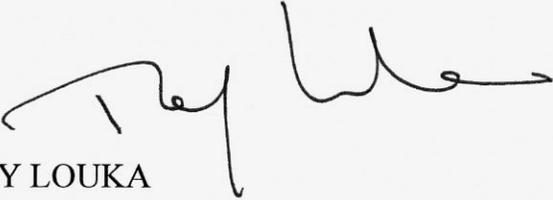
Memorandum

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To: RONGSHENG LOU
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Division of Land Use and Environmental Planning
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818 W. 7th Street, 12th Floor
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Date: November 19, 2013

File: 08- Riv-60- PM 22.1/26.5
Construct Truck Lanes and
Standard Shoulders
RTIP ID: 3TK04MA13
Project ID: RIV120201
EA: 0N69U


From: TONY LOUKA
Office Chief
Environmental Engineering

Subject: Request for TCWG Concurrence in Use of Conformity Exemption for Truck
Climbing Lane Project

This project proposes to construct an east bound truck ascending lane, a west bound truck descending lane and an inside, and outside standard shoulders in both directions on State Route 60 (SR-60) in Riverside County between Gilman Springs Road, Post Mile (PM) 22.10 and 1.47 miles west of Jack Rabbit Trail PM 26.50.

Need

The proposed project area is in mountainous terrain with numerous tight radius horizontal curves, short tangent sections, steep grades, and swift changes in elevation. The sustained uphill grade exceeds 2.9 percent. A few locations have uphill grades that exceed 6 percent. The overall change of elevation from one end of the project to the other is a little greater than 500 feet over a distance of 2.5 miles. Due to the mountainous terrain and the presence of a concrete median barrier, the horizontal alignment of the roadway is also restricted with little or no existing shoulder width. This is true particularly on the left side of the travelled way inside shoulder where there is no inside shoulder for much of the project limits.

The vehicle mix within the project limits contains 16 percent trucks. Because of the steep grades, automobiles with trailers, trucks, and buses have difficulty maintaining a reasonable speed throughout the entire segment.

Approximately 17.9 percent of the accidents in the eastbound direction involve trucks with trailers, and 28.4 percent of accidents involve pickup/panel trucks, because of the speed differential between high-speed passenger vehicles and slow-moving trucks. Approximately 13 percent of the accidents in the eastbound direction involve trucks with trailers, and 21.3 percent of accidents involve pickup/panel trucks.

Approximately 38.8 percent of the hitting-object accidents in the eastbound direction involve vehicles striking either the median barrier on the left or the guardrail or embankment slope on the right because of the horizontal restrictions. In the westbound direction, this number was increased, with approximately 50 percent of vehicles striking either the median barrier or guardrail/embankment slope .

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve safety, reduce traffic congestion, and improve operational characteristics along this segment of SR-60. This project would improve freeway operations by providing for trucks and other slow vehicles that face challenges on this segment and increase delays. Safety problems may arise when the reduction in speed of heavy trucks exceeds 10 mph along the grade. Trucks characteristically exhibit the lowest level of hill-climbing performance of all vehicles on highways and freeways. Thus, at uphill grades of sufficient length and steepness, their speed loss may be great enough that they impede the flow of traffic, reducing the capacity of the highway to carry traffic. Truck-climbing and/or truck-descending lanes would separate the slow moving trucks from passenger vehicles. It is anticipated that truck involvement in accidents will decrease as a result.

Standard shoulders throughout the limits of the project would provide some recovery room for errant vehicles that may leave the travelled way, and would allow slow vehicles to pull over safely.

Project alternatives under consideration include the following:

Alternative 1: No-Build

The No-Build alternative would maintain the facility in its current condition. No improvements would be implemented at this time; therefore, no capital cost is

associated with this alternative. As development continues and traffic demand increases, traffic operational characteristics will further deteriorate resulting in an increase in congestion, vehicle delay, safety issues, and vehicle-operating costs. The No-Build alternative would not address or alleviate the forecasted operational and safety issues along this segment of SR-60.

Alternative 2:

- Construct an eastbound truck-climbing lane, a westbound truck-descending lane and construct standard inside and outside shoulders.
- Widen and grade the area adjacent to the truck lanes and shoulders to the ultimate freeway condition.
- Rehabilitate the existing #1 and #2 lanes as well as the inside shoulder, in each direction. The rehabilitation effort will be designed under a separate contract, and funded under a separate State Highway Operation Performance Program (SHOPP) project under Expenditure Authorization (EA) (1C090). Both contracts are to be combined prior to commencing the construction phase.
- Reconstruct the existing concrete median barrier for the entire project.
- Most of the widening for this alternative would be to the outside of the existing roadbed. However, for the portion of the freeway between PM 24.3 and PM 25.7, consideration would be given to widen to the median, if feasible.

The project is outside of the current (2010) Census Urbanized Area. Therefore the project, overall, fits the "Truck climbing lanes outside the urbanized area" exemption from conformity analysis requirements under 40 CFR 93.126. General rehabilitation, shoulder widening, and median barrier reconstruction likewise fall under full conformity exemptions in 40 CFR 93.126.

The truck "descending" lanes would also fall under the conformity exemption because they are for the same purpose (isolation of very slow trucks from normal traffic on the steep grade) as the climbing lanes. A similar, previous project on SBd-15 was found to meet the exemption for the same reason.

Please see Exhibit A, B, and C for project location, project layout plans, and 2010 Census Urbanized Area map.

The widening in Alternative 2 will not add capacity. Future traffic for the no-build is the same as the build condition.

We would like to request TCWG to concur with conformity exemption status for the project.

If you have any questions, please call Tony Louka at 383-6385.

c: Kerrie Hudson, Environmental Studies “A”
Radhakrishnan, Raghuram, Project Manager.