

Date: November 27, 2007

Committee Meeting Date: December 13, 2007

Board Meeting Date: January 3, 2008

BOARD MEMORANDUM

ACTION ITEM

TO: Policy Advisory Committee
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
General Manager

FROM: John H. Ristow
Chief CMA Officer

SUBJECT: Development of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes Project

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the VTA Board of Directors direct VTA staff to continue the current preliminary engineering and environmental documentation phase in the development of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane projects on US Route 101 and State Route 85.

BACKGROUND:

On September 9, 2004, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into state law Assembly Bill 2032. This legislation allows VTA, one of three agencies in California, to conduct, administer and operate a value pricing program on any two of the transportation corridors included in the carpool lane system in Santa Clara County in coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The bill requires net toll revenue generated after payment of direct expenses to be allocated to the construction of high occupancy vehicle facilities and the improvement of transit services within the HOT lane corridor pursuant to an expenditure plan adopted by the agency.

In the fall of 2003, VTA Board of Directors directed staff to conduct a feasibility study of HOT lane facilities for Santa Clara County. This study commenced in April 2004 with the objectives to evaluate Santa Clara County freeways for potential HOT lane operations, to identify the most promising corridors for HOT lane demonstrations, and to conduct operational analysis of select corridors with HOT lanes operations. The feasibility study concluded that HOT lane operations on Santa Clara County freeways are financially feasible. The study recommended carrying forward two corridors for possible implementation of a demonstration HOT lane project.

In the fall of 2005, the VTA Board of Directors authorized VTA staff to proceed to the preliminary engineering phase of the development of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane projects based on the findings from the Santa Clara County HOT Lane Feasibility Study.

DISCUSSION:

As directed by the Board, VTA staff is currently involved in the preliminary engineering and environmental phases of project development of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane Projects on the two selected corridors. The initial phase of the project involves refining the project parameters, such as the limits of HOT lane operations in the US 101 and SR 85 corridors, locations of ingress/egress points and lane geometrics. The later phase of the project involves obtaining environmental clearance through preparation of Caltrans Project Study Report/Project Report and advancing preliminary engineering to approximately 30 percent design level.

The preliminary engineering and environmental phases of the HOT Lanes Project is estimated to be complete in October 2008. Upon completion of the phase, VTA staff will seek VTA Board of Directors approval of the recommendation to proceed into final design and again seek Board approval at the completion of that phase for deployment of HOT Lane Projects.

At the November 2007 VTA PAC meeting, VTA staff provided an update on the development of HOT Lanes projects. The PAC recommended that VTA staff bring this item again as an action item to allow PAC to highlight concerns that the committee members might have on technical feasibility, social equity, and financial issues for conveyance to the VTA Board of Directors.

VTA will provide a presentation to the PAC to set the context for discussion consisting of overview background material on HOT Lane technical feasibility and operational functions, provide comparisons to other projects nationwide, and to address financial and equity implications.

ALTERNATIVES:

The VTA Board of Directors may direct staff to discontinue work on developing a HOT Lane Facility on Santa Clara County freeways.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The current contract with the URS Corporation team amounts to \$1,999,930. If the Board of Directors decides to discontinue the study, the contract with URS Corporation will be terminated.

Prepared by: Murali Ramanujam, Senior Transportation Engineer