



July 1, 2024

To: Regional Transportation Planning Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Draft 2024 State Route 91 Implementation Plan

Overview

The Orange County Transportation Authority and the Riverside County Transportation Commission annually prepare a plan for potential improvements along the State Route 91 corridor between State Route 57 in Orange County and Interstate 15 in Riverside County. The plan includes a listing of proposed improvements, preliminary cost estimates, and potential implementation timeframes. These improvements are sponsored by various agencies, such as the Orange County Transportation Authority, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, the Transportation Corridor Agencies, the California Department of Transportation, and cities along the corridor. The Draft 2024 State Route 91 Implementation Plan is provided for information purposes.

Recommendation

Receive and file as an information item.

Background

SB 1316 (Chapter 714, Statutes of 2008) requires the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) to annually prepare a plan for potential improvements along the State Route 91 (SR-91) corridor between State Route 57 (SR-57) in Orange County and Interstate 15 (I-15) in Riverside County. The Draft 2024 SR-91 Implementation Plan (2024 Plan) serves as a snapshot of current and planned activities within the SR-91 corridor. The 2024 Plan describes transportation benefits, anticipated costs, and schedules for projects and concepts through the post-2035 timeframe. The intent of the 2024 Plan is to provide a compilation of information on potential improvements along the SR-91 corridor. This 2024 Plan was prepared in consultation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA), and the cities of Anaheim, Corona, Orange, and Yorba Linda.

Discussion

Since 2003, considerable progress has been made in improving the SR-91 corridor. Over \$2 billion has been invested in the completion of 13 projects, including the addition of 76.6 lane miles throughout the SR-91 corridor as well as Metrolink station and associated service improvements. The improvements have helped the corridor keep up with population and employment growth and the related inter-county travel between Orange and Riverside counties to improve regional mobility. Completed projects from previous Plans and noted in this year's draft 2024 Plan include:

- Green River Road Overcrossing Improvement Project;
- North Main Street Corona Metrolink Parking Structure Project;
- Eastbound lane addition from State Route 241 (SR-241) to State Route 71 (SR-71);
- Lane addition in both directions between State Route 55 (SR-55) and SR-241;
- Westbound lane at Tustin Avenue;
- Metrolink service improvements;
- SR-91 Corridor Improvement Project initial phase;
- Express Bus Service;
- La Sierra Metrolink parking improvements;
- SR-91 Corridor Operations Project;
- Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station improvements;
- 15/91 Express Lanes Connector; and
- Eastbound 91 Express Lane Extension.

OCTA and RCTC have adopted similar goals for the 91 Express Lanes to continue to maintain safe, reliable, and predictable travel times for motorists traversing between the two counties. These goals include:

- Optimizing vehicle throughput at free-flow speeds and increasing average vehicle occupancy;
- Balancing capacity and demand to serve customers who pay tolls, as well as carpoolers (3+) who are offered discounted tolls;
- Generating sufficient revenue to sustain the financial viability of the 91 Express Lanes;
- Paying debt service and maintaining debt service coverage; and
- Reinvesting net revenues on the SR-91 corridor to improve regional mobility, when appropriate.

Information for projects in the 2024 Plan is updated annually to ensure that the planning and implementation of each project is coordinated and timed to provide maximum benefits to the SR-91 corridor and minimize construction impacts to commuters and the surrounding communities.

Project Coordination

In October 2019, a consensus was reached to sequence a set of upcoming projects to improve the SR-91 corridor. OCTA, RCTC, TCA, Caltrans Districts 8 and 12, as well as Caltrans Headquarters, agreed to a project coordination process to enable the streamlining of the SR-241/SR-91 Tolloed Express Connector Project, while minimizing impacts to the SR-91 corridor. The agencies reached consensus on the following program of projects:

1. 15/91 Express Lanes Connector (completed)
2. SR-91 Corridor Operations Project (completed)
3. SR-71/SR-91 Interchange Improvements (in construction)
4. SR-241/SR-91 Tolloed Express Connector* (in final design)

*Note: SR-241/SR-91 Tolloed Express Connector is not dependent upon completion of SR-71/SR-91 interchange improvements.

The 2024 Plan (Attachment A) includes various updates to project status, costs, and schedules. Projects included in the 2024 Plan are organized as follows: Orange County projects, Riverside County projects, and bi-county projects as shown below.

- Orange County projects include three improvements:
 - SR-91 improvements between SR-57 and SR-55;
 - Placentia Metrolink Rail Station; and
 - Metrolink improvements.
- Riverside County projects include four improvements:
 - Santa Ana River Trail;
 - SR-71/SR-91 interchange improvements; and
 - Improvements east of I-15.
- Bi-county projects which benefit both Orange and Riverside counties include three projects:
 - SR-241/SR-91 Tolloed Express Connector;
 - 91 Eastbound Corridor Operations Project (SR-241 to SR-71); and
 - 91 Westbound Improvements (SR-241 to SR-71).

As part of the preparation of the 2024 Plan, a traffic analysis was conducted to quantify travel times for westbound (WB) morning and eastbound (EB) afternoon conditions for all projects scheduled to be completed by 2030 and 2045. Traffic conditions along the SR-91 corridor stabilized for the most part throughout 2022, which is the base year for the existing conditions. The WB morning traffic analysis results indicate that for the year 2030 forecasts, travel times are anticipated to increase in Riverside County (by about six minutes), and no change is anticipated in Orange County. For 2045 forecasts, WB travel times decrease in Riverside County by about 21 minutes but increase in Orange County by about 16 minutes.

The EB afternoon traffic analysis indicates that for the year 2030 forecasts, travel times in Riverside County are anticipated to increase (by about four minutes) but decrease in Orange County (by about 33 minutes). EB travel times in Riverside County for 2045 decrease (by about 14 minutes) and increase in Orange County (by about 28 minutes). OCTA and RCTC will continue monitoring the SR-91 traffic pattern changes throughout 2024. Traffic benefits from the recently completed projects in Riverside County (15/91 Express Lanes Connector and Eastbound 91 Express Lane Extension) will be realized in subsequent traffic analyses.

Generally, the increases in travel times are attributed to growth in population and employment opportunities as well limitations at some end points to handle growth in travel demand. The improvements in travel times are due to the benefits of various projects in response to implementation of local general plans, hence the need to continue bi-county transportation planning and coordination along the primary direct route between Orange and Riverside counties.

Conceptual Projects

The improvements included in Appendix A of the 2024 Plan are conceptual in nature and implementation would require additional planning, design, and funding. The 2024 Plan includes two new conceptual projects: the Green River Road Bike Lane Gap Closure and the North Main Transit Connector. These conceptual projects will support local and regional connectivity and provide travel choice benefits to the corridor.

Summary

OCTA and RCTC have completed updating the Plan for 2024 required by SB 1316. Consistent with the annual updates, it is important to ensure that projects continue to be coordinated in such a way that they provide maximum benefits to the SR-91 corridor. This would be achieved through implementing projects that optimize the operations of the corridor and the 91 Express Lanes. The 2024 Plan serves as a compilation of future potential projects and project level decisions will be made when individual projects are being considered for implementation. On June 27, 2024, the State Route 91 Advisory Committee received and filed the 2024 Plan as an information item.

Attachment

- A. Draft State Route 91 Implementation Plan 2024

Prepared By:

Alison Army
Principal Transportation Analyst
(714) 560-5537

Approved By:

Kia Mortazavi
Executive Director, Planning
(714) 560-5741