



June 6, 2022

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Draft 2022 State Route 91 Implementation Plan

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is written over the "From:" line of the header.

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. The Draft 2022 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 2022 SR-91 Implementation Plan (Plan) serves as an outlook of current and planned activities within the SR-91 corridor. The Plan describes projects, transportation benefits, and anticipated costs and schedules to implement through the post-2035 timeframe. The intent of the Plan is to provide a compilation of information for projects along the SR-91 corridor. This 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, substantial progress has been made in improving the SR-91 corridor. Nearly \$2 billion has been invested with the completion of nine projects, including the addition of 68.7 lane miles and multimodal services and projects throughout the SR-91 corridor. Average daily traffic throughput has also increased by 15 percent. This indicates that improvements within the corridor have helped to alleviate the effects of population growth and employment between Orange and Riverside counties as well as reduce the spillover of highway traffic onto parallel local roads. Completed projects from the 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 addition at Tustin Avenue;
- Metrolink service improvements;
- SR-91 Corridor Improvement Project initial phase to add general purpose and express lanes and modernize local interchanges;
- Express Bus Service;
- La Sierra Metrolink parking improvements; and
- SR-91 Corridor Operations Project.

OCTA and RCTC have adopted similar goals for the 91 Express Lanes to continue to maintain a safe, reliable, and predictable travel time for motorists traversing seamlessly between the two counties. These guiding principles 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 for transit and highway improvements within the SR-91 corridor to improve regional mobility, when appropriate.

Information for projects in the Plan is updated annually. This ensures that the planning and implementation of each project is carefully coordinated to determine the appropriate timing to provide maximum benefits to the SR-91 corridor. Additionally, projects on the corridor should be coordinated to minimize construction impacts to commuters and the surrounding communities. As projects progress through development, operational analysis by OCTA and RCTC will be

prepared before implementation to ensure that the projects meet the OCTA and RCTC goals for the SR-91 corridor.

In October 2019, a consensus was reached that set the stage for a series of projects included in the Plan to be implemented sequentially to improve the SR-91 corridor. OCTA, RCTC, TCA, Caltrans District 8 District 12, as well as Caltrans Headquarters agreed to project sequencing to enable the streamlining of the SR-241/SR-91 Tolled Express Connector Project, while minimizing impacts to the SR-91 corridor. The agencies reached consensus on a program of projects and sequencing as follows:

1. 15/91 Express Lanes Connector
2. SR-91 Corridor Operations Project
3. SR-71/SR-91 interchange improvements*
4. SR-241/SR-91 Tolled Express Lanes Connector

*Note: SR-241/SR-91 Tolled Express Connector is not dependent upon completing SR-71/SR-91 interchange improvements.

Coordination efforts for the 2022 Plan resulted in minor updates to project status, costs, and schedules. Projects included in the Plan are organized as follows: Orange County projects, Riverside County projects, and bi-county projects as shown below.

- Orange County projects include three improvements at a total cost of approximately \$530 million:
 - SR-91 improvements between SR-57 and SR-55;
 - Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station improvements; and
 - Placentia Metrolink Rail Station.
- Riverside County projects include three improvements, totaling over \$399 million:
 - 15/91 Express Lanes Connector;
 - SR-71/SR-91 interchange; and
 - Improvements east of I-15.
- Bi-county projects, which benefit both Orange and Riverside counties, total over \$380 million and include:
 - SR-241/SR-91 Tolled Express Connector; and
 - Sixth lane addition from SR-241 to SR-71.

Due to the lingering effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the 2021 traffic patterns are not deemed as a true reflection of the typical existing conditions nor as a proper baseline to forecast the future demand and operations of the SR-91 corridor. Therefore, the pre-COVID-19 traffic conditions are being utilized

for the existing conditions and baseline for the forecasted future traffic conditions in the 2022 Plan and further described in Attachment A.

OCTA and RCTC will continue monitoring the SR-91 traffic pattern changes throughout 2022. If traffic conditions are showing a trend of normalization, then the traffic analysis will be updated for the 2023 Plan.

The Plan also includes a listing of potential future improvements that are highly conceptual in nature (Appendix A of the Plan). Some of the concepts are derived from the Riverside-Orange County Major Investment Study (MIS), for example;

- Anaheim to Ontario International Airport high-speed ground transportation system;
- Irvine-Corona Expressway (ICE) from SR-241/State Route 133 to I-15/Cajalco Road; (MIS Corridor B)
- Connector improvements at the SR-91/SR-55 interchange;

Appendix A includes the full list of concepts. The projected cost of the conceptual improvements exceeds \$14 billion, which is based on preliminary cost estimates dating as far back as 2005. The implementation of the concepts would require a significant amount of planning, design, external funding, technological advancements, and future policy and public input.

Staff continues to monitor the financial viability and geotechnical feasibility of the ICE concept as requested by the SR-91 Advisory Committee and the Riverside Orange Corridor Authority in 2010. A review of recent tunneling projects shows feasibility for the ICE tunnel concept is slowly improving as tunneling technology progresses. Technology has not advanced to the point where long, wide highway tunnels can be constructed at a reasonable, fundable, or viable cost. However, modern boring methods have lowered the cost on smaller, shorter tunnels. Although some tunneling projects have been completed in California with similar lane configurations as the ICE concept, without significant state and federal policy and funding support, this project will be a challenge to complete. In addition, land uses adjacent to the proposed eastern terminus complicate the viability of the conceptual ICE alignment with ongoing commercial and residential developments occupying formerly open space.

Summary

OCTA and RCTC have completed the 2022 Plan required by SB 1316. As the Plan is updated annually, it is important to ensure that projects are 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 Plan serves as a compilation of future potential projects and project level decisions can be made when individual projects are being considered for implementation. OCTA and RCTC will continue monitoring the SR-91 traffic pattern changes throughout the year of 2022.

Attachment

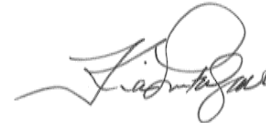
- A. Draft State Route 91 Implementation Plan 2022

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