



July 1, 2019

To: Regional Planning and Highways Committee
From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Draft 2019 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 potential 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 2019 State Route 91 Implementation Plan is provided.

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 Authority (RCTC) to annually prepare a plan for improvements along State Route 91 (SR-91) between Interstate 15 (I-15) and State Route 57 (SR-57). SB 1316 also enables the use of 91 Express Lanes excess toll revenues, when available, for congestion relief projects or services along the SR-91 corridor between SR-57 and the Orange/Riverside County line for OCTA and between the Orange/Riverside County line and I-15 for RCTC.

The Draft SR-91 Implementation Plan (Plan) serves as a snapshot of current and planned activities within the SR-91 corridor. The Plan describes projects and transportation benefits and anticipated costs through the post-2035 timeframe.

The intent of the Plan is to serve as a compilation of information for projects along the SR-91 corridor. This Plan was prepared in consultation with the California Department of Transportation, the Transportation Corridor Agencies, and the cities of Anaheim, Corona, Orange, and Yorba Linda who have provided feedback on the Plan.

Discussion

Since 2002, significant progress has been made in improving the SR-91 corridor. Nearly \$2 billion has been invested in the completion of eight projects, including the addition of 66.5 lane miles throughout the SR-91 corridor. Since 2003, average daily traffic throughput has 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 by enhancing capacity and improving mobility. 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 at Tustin Avenue;
- Metrolink service improvements;
- SR-91 Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) initial phase; and
- La Sierra Metrolink parking improvements.

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 on the SR-91 corridor to improve regional mobility, when appropriate.

As information for projects in the Plan is updated annually, it is important to ensure that the planning and implementation of each project are carefully coordinated to determine the appropriate sequencing that provides maximum benefits to the SR-91 corridor. Additionally, projects on the corridor should be coordinated to minimize construction impacts to communities and the surrounding communities. Going forward, operational analysis by OCTA and RCTC will need to be prepared for each project prior to implementation. This effort will ensure that the projects meet the OCTA and RCTC goals for the SR-91 corridor.

The 2019 Plan projects (Attachment A) are organized as follows: Orange County projects, Riverside County projects, and bi-county projects.

- The Orange County set of projects includes four improvements at a total cost of approximately \$600 million. They are:
 - SR-91 improvements between SR-57 and SR-55;
 - Anaheim Canyon Metrolink Station improvements;
 - Placentia Metrolink Rail Station; and
 - Fairmont Boulevard improvements.
- The Riverside County set of projects includes three improvements at a total cost of more than \$350 million:
 - I-15/SR-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 include:
 - Express Bus service improvements;
 - SR-91 Corridor Operations Project;
 - Sixth general purpose lane addition from SR-241 to SR-71; and
 - SR-241/91 Express Connector.

The 2019 Plan includes an accelerated new project, RCTC's SR-91 Corridor Operations Project, which will enhance the recently completed SR-91 CIP. This project will provide an additional westbound lane between Green River Road and SR-241. The portion between the SR-241 and the Orange/Riverside county line is part of OCTA's Measure M2 commitment. This project will help relieve morning peak operating conditions for motorists traveling from Riverside County to Orange County.

The Plan includes the SR-241/91 Express Lanes Connector project. The project could offer some positive benefits to the SR-91 corridor, provided it is implemented with or following improvements in Riverside County to allow for the traffic to dissipate downstream. Without the downstream eastbound improvements, implementing the SR-241/91 Express Lanes Connector Project could exacerbate the conditions near the county line, otherwise known as the “mixing bowl.” This is an area where there are multiple movements, causing very complex traffic conditions. These movements would be further complicated with the addition of the SR-241/91 Express Lanes Connector Project. There remain unanswered technical issues that OCTA and RCTC believe would enable a better understanding of the SR-241/91 Express Lanes Connector Project implications to the users of the SR-91 corridor. These include an in-depth understanding of the toll schedules, baseline traffic assumptions, and potential impacts to the operations of the general purpose and 91 Express Lanes during and after construction.

The improvements included in Appendix A of the Plan are highly conceptual in nature. Some of the concepts are derived from the Riverside-Orange County Major Investment Study (MIS). Appendix A includes an elevated four-lane facility between SR-241 and I-15 (MIS Corridor A), Anaheim to Ontario International Airport high-speed ground transportation system, and the Irvine-Corona Expressway (ICE) from SR-241/State Route 133 to I-15/Cajalco Road, connector improvements at the SR-91/SR-55 interchange, and an eastbound fifth lane addition near SR-241. The projected cost of the conceptual improvements exceeds \$14 billion, and the implementation will require a significant amount of planning, design, external funding, and future policy and public input.

Staff continues to monitor the financial viability of the ICE concept as requested by the SR-91 Advisory Committee and the Riverside Orange Corridor Authority in 2010. The ICE has not moved beyond the conceptual phase due to the current economic climate, lack of state and federal transportation funding, and the high construction cost. Until considerable advancements are made in efficient and affordable tunneling technology, and more state and federal funding is available, this project will be a major challenge to complete.

Summary

OCTA and RCTC have completed the 2019 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 2019 Plan projects have been updated and are organized by county jurisdiction.

Attachment

- A. Draft State Route 91 Implementation Plan 2019

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