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February 20, 2018

Mr. Mike Chesney
Strategic Planning Officer
Transportation Corridor Agencies
125 Pacifica, Suite #120
Irvine, CA 92618

Dear Mr. Chesney:

Thank you for meeting with us on January 30, 2018, regarding the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) South County Traffic Relief Initial Screening Report (Report). At the meeting, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) staff expressed issues related to the technical methods used for the study process. This letter serves as a summary of our discussion and documents follow-up items related to the next phase of study.

OCTA recommends use of the latest version of the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model ({OCTAM} version 4). The use of the prior version (OCTAM 3.4.1) is no longer consistent with the latest regional model. For consistency purposes, we strongly advise the TCA to use OCTAM 4.0 in future efforts, including the project study report (PSR). We would also note that additional detail should be provided for the forecasts included in the Report. Specifically, the Report stated that OCTAM was used to develop the year 2045 baseline conditions. However, calibrated and validated OCTAM 3.4.1 only has a horizon year of 2035. Please clarify what methodology was used to develop year 2045 future forecasts. OCTA wants to ensure that the consultant did not use inconsistent demographic projections as part of their forecasting effort.

OCTAM should not be used to model sensitivity of toll pricing changes. We also noted that the consultant used OCTAM for sensitivity of toll pricing changes (i.e., dynamic pricing of TCA facilities). This method is not recommended since OCTAM was not developed to evaluate dynamic toll pricing strategies. More detailed toll modeling tools should be used to supplement OCTAM toll outputs. For example, OCTA uses specialized software and consultants to performance this type of work, given the complexity of toll modeling.

The screening report lacked sufficient detail and clarity. We also discussed OCTA's comment that the Report lacked the typical detail needed to offer meaningful feedback on the modeling results. For example, the vehicle hours of delay on the arterial system included limited segments of four to six arterials. Further, it was not clear in the Report which segments of Interstate 5 (I-5) contribute to the reduced vehicles hours of delay. Future studies need to report volume-to-capacity ratios on meaningful segments of facilities as part of the analysis.

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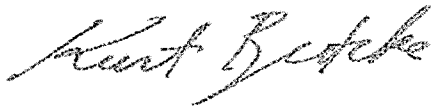
The report also mentioned three projects that were under study by other agencies, but there was not a clear description if these were included in the travel demand modeling. The three projects included: the widening of Ortega Highway to four lanes in San Juan Capistrano, the planned extension of the I-5 high-occupancy vehicle lane from Avenida Pico to the San Diego County Line, and the extension of La Pata Avenue to Cristianitos Road. As discussed, the widening of Ortega Highway to four lanes (two lanes in each direction) is included on the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH), has been environmentally cleared (California Environmental Quality Act only), and should be assumed as part of any future condition. At the January 30, 2018 meeting, the consultant indicated that this was assumed, and future efforts should clearly document these facts. It was mentioned that the other two projects were not included in the modeling assumptions since both are under study.

Converting Los Patrones Parkway to a tolled facility may divert traffic onto surrounding facilities. We further discussed that Los Patrones Parkway (Oso Parkway to Cow Camp Road) was modeled as a tolled extension of State Route 241. This four-lane arterial is planned to open this year, and portions of the new road appear as "F" Street on the MPAH. Further, the facility was included in the Rancho Mission Viejo development plan, approved by the County of Orange in 2004 as a conventional arterial. OCTA staff is concerned about the potential traffic impacts of converting a four-lane, divided arterial, capable of moving 30,000 vehicles a day, to a tolled facility. With tolling, the traffic diversion to other arterials and I-5 could be significant, and this issue was not addressed in the study.

Finally, it was mentioned that the project development team (PDT) will be meeting this month for the PSR (which is the next phase of study). Please include Greg Nord (gnord@octa.net), Principal Transportation Analyst, on the PDT.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to review technical details with you, and look forward to working with you on the PSR.

Sincerely,



Kurt Brotcke
Director, Strategic Planning

c: Les Card, LSA Associates