



June 5, 2020

To: State Route 91 Advisory Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, OCTA
Anne Mayer, Executive Director, RCTC

Subject: Draft 2020 State Route 91 Implementation Plan

Handwritten signatures of Darrell E. Johnson and Anne E. Mayer in blue ink.

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 2020 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 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, 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. 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 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 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.

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. Going forward, operational analysis by OCTA and RCTC will need to be prepared for each project prior to 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 in sequential order to improve the SR-91 corridor. OCTA, RCTC, TCA, Caltrans District 8 and District 12, as well as Caltrans Headquarters, worked through five issues related to project sequencing. This framework will enable the streamlining of the implementation of the SR-241/SR-91 Tolloed Express Lanes Connector Project while minimizing impacts to the SR-91 corridor. The subject matter of the multi-agency consensus is outlined below:

- Setting priorities for SR-91 corridor projects to reduce construction-related impacts;
- Allowing completion of the environmental approval process and updating related programming documents;
- Clarifying lead agencies for final design, construction, and maintenance;
- Identifying the principal funding agency for final design, construction, and maintenance; and
- Designating lead agencies for retaining toll revenue and toll setting/operational control.

Based on the above framework, the agencies reached consensus on a program of projects and sequencing as outlined below:

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

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

The 2020 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.
 - 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, totaling nearly \$390 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 totaling over \$230 million include:
 - Express Bus service improvements;
 - SR-91 Corridor Operations Project;
 - Sixth general-purpose lane addition from SR-241 to SR-71; and
 - SR-241/SR-91 Tolled Express Lanes Connector.

For the 2020 Plan, traffic analysis for the capacity-enhancing projects was performed and traffic data was calibrated to reflect pre-novel coronavirus (COVID-19) traffic patterns. The operations analysis quantified travel time savings for westbound (WB) morning and eastbound (EB) afternoon conditions for the capacity-enhancing projects in 2030 and beyond. The WB morning traffic analysis results indicate that for the year 2030 forecasts, travel times are anticipated to improve in Riverside County (by about six minutes), and in Orange County (by about 11 minutes). The EB afternoon traffic analysis indicates that for the year 2030 forecasts, travel times in Riverside County are anticipated to improve (by about seven minutes), and increase (by about 11 minutes) in Orange County. Traffic assumptions for 2030 and beyond will be revisited for the 2021 Plan given changing travel patterns due to COVID-19 and related economic impacts.

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, 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 would 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. Although some tunneling projects have been completed in the State of California with similar lane configurations as the ICE concept, until more state and federal funding is available, this project will be a major challenge to complete.

Summary

OCTA and RCTC have completed the 2020 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 2020 Plan projects have been updated and are organized by county jurisdiction.

Although current traffic levels in the corridor are down significantly, the longer-term travel demand implications are unknown. The Plan serves as a compilation of future potential projects and project level decisions that can be made when individual projects are being considered for implementation. Further, broader COVID-19-related implications can be addressed in next year's Plan once there is a better assessment of the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

Attachment

- A. Draft State Route 91 Implementation Plan 2020