



NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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Press Release

File: 1200.4

TO: Hollie Grimaldi-Flores, KNCO
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FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Despite State Budget Problems, Planning Improvements Continue for the SR 49 Corridor

DATE: July 24, 2009

On July 23, 2009 Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) members Ed Scofield, Nevada County District 2 Supervisor, and Chauncey Poston, Grass Valley City Council member, were joined by representatives of the California Highway Patrol (CHP), Caltrans, Nevada County Public Works, Citizens for SR 49 Safety, Golden Oaks Homeowners Association, and NCTC staff to discuss safety and traffic operation improvements for the SR 49 Corridor from Grass Valley to the county line at the Bear River Bridge.

Rich Nickells, Public Information Officer for the California Highway Patrol Grass Valley Office, reported that in 2005 there were fifty collisions and eight fatalities in the SR 49 corridor. In 2008 total accidents were reduced to twenty-one, with only one fatality, due in large measure to the installation of the rumble strip on SR 49 and enhanced enforcement of the corridor by the CHP. Officer Nickells also reported that the CHP Grass Valley office has received a one year grant to fund continued enhanced enforcement of the corridor from August 1, 2009 to August 1, 2010.

NCTC Executive Director, Dan Landon, reported on the status of the SR 49/La Barr Meadows Road Signalization and Widening Project. This project will relocate several local roads and driveways to a new signalized intersection with turn pockets and frontage roads just south of the existing La Barr Meadows Road intersection. The project will also widen SR 49 to a four lane highway from Timberline Drive to Lode Line Way. The project design, including construction specifications, plans, and estimates, has been completed. Right-of-way acquisition is finished and demolition of buildings in the new right-of-way has been accomplished. The next major steps for the project are to complete the bid process and begin construction. However,

these steps are waiting on completion of the state budget for 2009/10, and on the sale of construction bonds authorized under Proposition 1B to provide \$18.6 million in funding for construction capital and support costs. An additional \$5.9 million of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) programmed funds will need to be allocated by the California Transportation Commission to fund construction.

Rick Helman, Senior Planner with Caltrans District 3, gave a report on the completion of the Corridor System Management Plan (CSMP) for SR 49. The plan is a requirement for all Proposition 1B projects. The CSMP process recognizes the importance of multi-jurisdictional collaboration to support and manage transportation services. The objectives of the CSMP are to improve safety in the transportation system, reduce travel time and traffic congestion, and improve traffic operations along the corridor in the most effective manner. In the development of the CSMP, NCTC worked with Caltrans to break two large major capital projects within the Nevada County portion of the corridor into a series of smaller projects, which have been prioritized by Caltrans and NCTC. NCTC has requested that safety be the number one factor in project phasing. As a result of this cooperative comprehensive effort, a collection of projects was identified and prioritized into eight phases. A list of the eight phases can be viewed in Table 10 on pages 31 and 32 of the CSMP, and Figure 6 on page 38 is a locator map of the eight sites (CSMP website link: http://www.corridormobility.org/Content/10022/SR_49.html). The project delivery phasing plan was guided by several principles, including specific direction from NCTC that smaller, less costly safety and operational projects be planned on the SR 49 corridor that can be delivered sooner and will have a higher priority over larger more costly projects.

Caltrans will provide an annual report on the progress within the corridor to NCTC and other stakeholders as they implement and update the CSMP. A major key to implementing the projects in the CSMP are the state funding programs for safety and operational improvements. Unfortunately all state funding programs are currently uncertain due to the state budget crisis. Reports on potential funding will be provided at future NCTC and stakeholder meetings.

The discussion at the meeting concluded by reviewing a number of local issues, including potential improvements at the SR 49 and Brewer Road intersection, SR 49 and Smith Road intersection, and northbound acceleration lanes at Combie Road. The stakeholders committee agreed to meet quarterly to monitor progress on implementation of transportation improvements in the corridor.

Additional information on NCTC projects can be found at the newly updated NCTC website at: <http://www.nctc.ca.gov> .

cc: NCTC Commissioners
SR 49 Stakeholders Committee