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MICHAEL WOODMAN, Executive Director


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Mike Woodman, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the November 2021 Meeting

DATE: November 17, 2021

CALTRANS 2021 INTERREGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Caltrans approved the 2021 ITSP update on October 1, 2020. Prior to approval, NCTC staff coordinated with the Rural Counties Task Force (RCTF) and, as Chair of the North State Super Region (NSSR), provided comments on the draft plan raising concerns that some of the proposed scoring criteria for the selection of projects funded through the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program disadvantaged rural projects. In addition to submitting comments, a joint meeting was held with representatives from Caltrans, RCTF, and the NSSR to discuss these concerns and propose modifications for consideration. In response, Caltrans made revisions to the scoring criteria and the majority of the concerns raised were addressed. The comment letters submitted by NCTC and the NSSR, as well as the Caltrans response to the comments, are included in the Correspondence for the November 17, 2021 NCTC meeting.

CALTRANS 2021 INTERREGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ITIP) FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the ITIP is to improve interregional mobility for people and goods across the State of California on highway and passenger rail corridors of strategic importance. These strategic corridors provide the transportation network that connects the state's major regions to one another and connects the rural regions to the large urban areas. The corridors also provide connectivity to neighboring states and the international border with Mexico. The ITIP is a program of projects funded through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that obtains funding primarily through the per-gallon State tax on gasoline.

State Route 49 is identified as a strategic interregional corridor in the Caltrans 2021 Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP), and NCTC staff and stakeholders have been advocating for ITIP funding for the SR 49 Corridor Improvement Project. Caltrans Headquarters submitted the funding recommendations for the 2021 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) on October 15, 2021, which include \$3 million in funding for the Right of Way for Phase 2 of the SR 49 Corridor

Improvement Project. NCTC, in partnership with Caltrans, proposes to program a matching \$3 million of Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funding to fully fund the Right of Way Phase 2.

The SR 49 Corridor Improvement Project begins at the limits of the previous La Barr Meadows Signalization Project (PM 11.1) and ends just south of the McKnight Way Interchange (PM 13.3), connecting to the four lane Golden Center Freeway. The project (STIP 4E170) will make improvements to this segment focused on improving safety, evacuation capacity, operations, goods movement, and multi-modal mobility improvements. This project is designed to be funded in three phases as state and federal transportation funding allow.

The ultimate project includes redirecting numerous entrances to the highway from a newly constructed frontage road system to access the highway at two new at-grade intersections that will either be roundabouts or signalized. It will also construct northbound and southbound truck climbing lanes and will eliminate the merge points that currently exist to the north and south of the project limits, connecting to the existing four-lane northbound/southbound sections. This project also proposes to further address safety concerns through the installation of a continuous median barrier, eight-foot shoulders with rumble strips, animal crossing tunnel with fencing, enhanced wet night visibility striping, and pavement edge treatments.

Phase 1: Construction of the northbound truck climbing lane, a 16' wide continuous two way left turn lane, 10' shoulders, and elimination of the northbound merge point improving operations and improving northbound evacuation capacity. This phase also includes southbound right turn lanes at Wellwood Way, Bethel Church Way, Smith Road, and Crestview Drive. Other safety features include enhanced wet night visibility striping, rumble strips, and pavement edge treatments. A wildlife undercrossing with fencing will be installed as part of this phase to help reduce deer strikes.

Phase: 2: Construction of the southbound truck climbing lane, 10' shoulders with rumble strips, and elimination of the lane drop/merge point south of the McKnight Way Interchange improving the southbound highway to segment to four lanes and increasing evacuation capacity. This phase will also include enhanced wet night visibility striping, rumble strips, and pavement edge treatments.

Phase 3: Construction of frontage roads, elimination of ingress/egress points, construction of two access-controlled intersections, initially proposed in the vicinity of Wellwood Lane and Smith Road, and installation of a center median barrier.