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MEMORANDUM

TO: Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the November 2020 Meeting

DATE: November 18, 2020

State Route 49, I-80 to McKnight Way Safety Assessment Report

Caltrans has released the State Route (SR) 49 Safety Assessment Report highlighting safety findings and proposed improvements to the corridor between Interstate 80 in Auburn and McKnight Way in Grass Valley.

Caltrans invites members of the public to view the SR 49 Safety Assessment Report at www.hwy49safety.com. Public input is essential for project development and enables the Department to account for various perspectives and impacts for equity. The deadline to submit comments and questions to Caltrans District 3 has been extended to Friday, December 11, 2020.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to Caltrans District 3, Program/Project Management, 703 B Street, Marysville, CA 95901, Attn: HWY 49 Safety Assessment, or via email at hwy49safety@dot.ca.gov.

The SR 49 Safety Audit Workshop was held on February 18, 19, and 20, 2020 at the Caltrans maintenance office in Rocklin and the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency in Auburn. The project area covers SR 49 from Interstate 80 (I-80) in Auburn to McKnight Way in Grass Valley.

At the beginning of the workshop, Caltrans identified the primary objectives of the study as follows:

1. Identify safety-related improvements that could be installed within the very near term
2. Identify enhancements that could be added to planned projects in the corridor
3. Identify long term projects to improve corridor safety

This effort was a collaboration of several agencies: Caltrans (District 3), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), California Highway Patrol (CHP), the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC), the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA), Placer County Department of Public Works, the City of Auburn, and the Auburn City Fire Department. The safety audit was the combined effort of 22 individuals representing the entities listed above. Caltrans retained Fehr & Peers to evaluate crash data and facilitate the efforts of the participants.

The morning of the first day was used to understand the nature of the issues, with a deep dive into the historical collision data. In the afternoon, the team conducted an in-person field review of the corridor with stops at six locations and discussed their observations. In the evening, a smaller group drove the corridor to observe conditions during darkness. On the second day, the team considered improvement ideas from their own experience, resource documents, and innovative efforts from elsewhere in the country. The final day was a review and refinement of the improvement strategies.

State Route 49, I-80 to McKnight Way Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan

On September 21, 2020, Caltrans, in collaboration with Nevada County Transportation Commission and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency, held a “kickoff” meeting to commence development of a Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) for State Route 49. This work project will build on the Corridor System Management Plan prepared by NCTC for the 13.6-mile segment of SR 49 from the Southern Nevada County line to the SR 49/McKnight Way Junction in 2018. The CMCP stakeholders list includes several local government agencies as well as several citizens and citizen groups.

The CMCP incorporates the SR 49 corridor in Nevada and Placer counties, beginning in Placer County at the northern junction of Interstate 80 (I-80) in the City of Auburn and ending at the State Route 20 junction in the City of Grass Valley. The “corridor” also includes the Capitol Corridor passenger rail line, freight rail, local parallel arterial roadways, transit routes, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

The purpose of this effort is to create a CMCP through multimodal agency collaboration. The plan will identify, analyze, and evaluate transportation facilities along the SR 49 corridor, while also determining needs, gaps and trends associated with multimodal modes of transportation, some of which include transit, arterial, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian elements. The plan will prioritize projects, and provide a basis for qualifying for funding through Senate Bill 1 Solutions for Congested Corridors Program and other potential local, regional, state, and federal funding sources.

The project objectives are:

- Identify existing and future conditions and consistency with relevant plans.
- Prioritized list of multimodal transportation improvements and strategies.
- Funding strategy for corridor improvements.

The difference between the SR 49 CMCP and the SR 49 Safety Assessment is that the Safety Assessment only focuses on future safety projects, while the CMCP will take into account all projects on the corridor: safety, congestion relief, increased transit and intercity service, increased bicycle/pedestrian facilities

and use in order to meet the goals of SB 743 in the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

The CMCP also incorporates local streets and roads that are not on the State Highway System (SHS) and how they affect the corridor in the above project categories. The SR 49 Safety Audit does not address non-SHS facilities or transit/intercity services and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. It is projected that the CMCP will be completed in November 2021.

Western Nevada County Transit Development Plan and Nevada County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan 2020 Updates

The Western Nevada County Transit Development Plan (WNCTDP) update will analyze a wide range of transit and paratransit service options, capital needs, institutional and management improvements, and financial alternatives in order to develop a financially constrained five-year short-range transit operating plan. The WNCTDP will include a year-by-year implementation schedule for all plan elements, identifying the responsible parties and financial requirements.

The Nevada County Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (CP-HS) update is a countywide plan that will focus on ways to support and expand on the coordination activities and opportunities for transportation services among the various human service entities and the private and public transportation service providers. The plan will document existing needs and gaps in transportation services and identify operational and capital strategies to address them. The Federal Transit Administration grant funding programs require projects be included in a current CP-HS in order to be eligible for funding.

NCTC has retained WSP USA Inc. to update these two plans. WSP expects to complete draft documents for the WNCTDP the week of November 26 and drafts for the CP-HS in mid-December.