

HOV Lane Project Key Milestones

Initial Public Information Meetings.....	Spring 2004
Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Studies.....	2004 – 2007
Interim Public Informational Meeting.....	Fall 2006
◆ Draft Environmental Document.....	2007 – Spring 2008
Public Review of Draft Environmental Document.....	Summer 2008
Preferred Alternative Identification.....	Fall 2008
Final Environmental Document (Including Responses to Comments).....	Fall 2009
Funding for Implementation.....	T.B.D.
Final Design/Right-of-Way.....	2008 – 2012
Construction, pending availability of funding.....	T.B.D.
◆ Where we are now	

How To Stay Involved

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as the owner/operator of the state highway system, is the Lead Agency for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. Caltrans is responsible for developing the environmental document for the project and approving the EIR (CEQA). FHWA will review and approve the NEPA document. Please direct any questions or comments regarding the environmental process to Caltrans.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) is the local project sponsor of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. The SCCRTC, the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency, takes a leadership role in regional transportation planning, as well as the programming (funding) of projects such as this one. If your group or organization is interested in scheduling a presentation to hear an update on this project, please contact the SCCRTC office with your request.



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

www.sccrtc.org

For More Information

Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project Information

WEB: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/#scr>.

Submit project related questions and comments to:

PHONE: Colin Jones at the Caltrans Public Information Office at (831) 423-0396

EMAIL: santa_cruz_hov_project@dot.ca.gov.

WRITE: Kristen Merriman, Associate Environmental Planner, California Department of Transportation, Central Region Environmental, 2015 E. Shields, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726

Regional Transportation Commission Information

WEB: www.sccrtc.org for the latest regional planning and project information. You can sign up for the e-news, the best method to get up-to-date information.

Questions and comments on regional transportation planning and funding should be directed to:

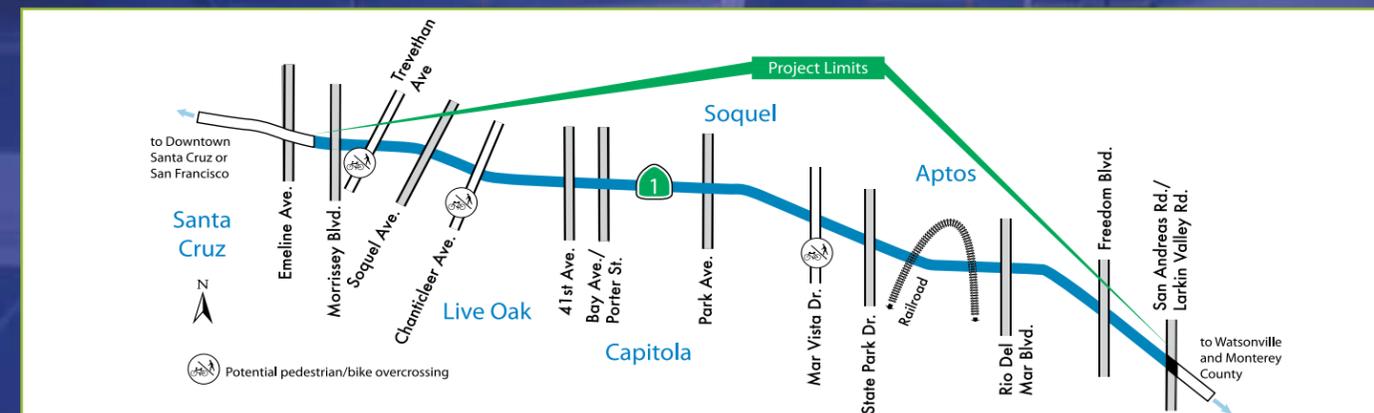
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Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911
(831) 460-3200
EMAIL: info@sccrtc.org

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The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have developed project alternatives to reduce congestion and improve safety and traffic operations on Highway 1 between Aptos and Santa Cruz. The Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project extends approximately 8.5 miles along Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County, from San Andreas/Larkin Valley Roads at the southern limit to just north of Morrissey Boulevard on the north. The proposed project places a priority on improving travel conditions for transit and high occupancy vehicles (HOV) as a way to maximize use of public resources and move the greatest number of people through the project area. Cross street mobility will also be improved through interchange modifications and through the addition or widening of bicycle lanes and sidewalks.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In developing the project purpose and need, the SCCRTC, Caltrans, and FHWA emphasized that project alternatives focus on encouraging ridesharing and the use of transit to address current and future travel demand and congestion. Ridesharing and transit would move the greatest number of people and maximize the use of public resources. The project team is evaluating three alternatives in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Impact Report (EIR): a No-Build Alternative, a Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, and a High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Alternative.

TRANSIT MARKET ANALYSIS

Studies are currently underway to identify and quantify the potential market for increased transit services along Highway 1 or parallel routes that could be served by the project alternatives. An overview of the Transit Market Analysis can be found at <http://www.sccrtc.org/hov.html>.

PROJECT UPDATE

In September 2006, three Open House public information meetings were held throughout the county to provide updates on the project studies. Participants had a chance to review current information (including preliminary traffic data and project design features), discuss the project with project team members and submit comments. A summary report of the comments received and other materials presented at the Open House meetings is available at the SCCRTC project website at <http://www.sccrtc.org/hov.html>.

ALTERNATIVES UNDER EVALUATION

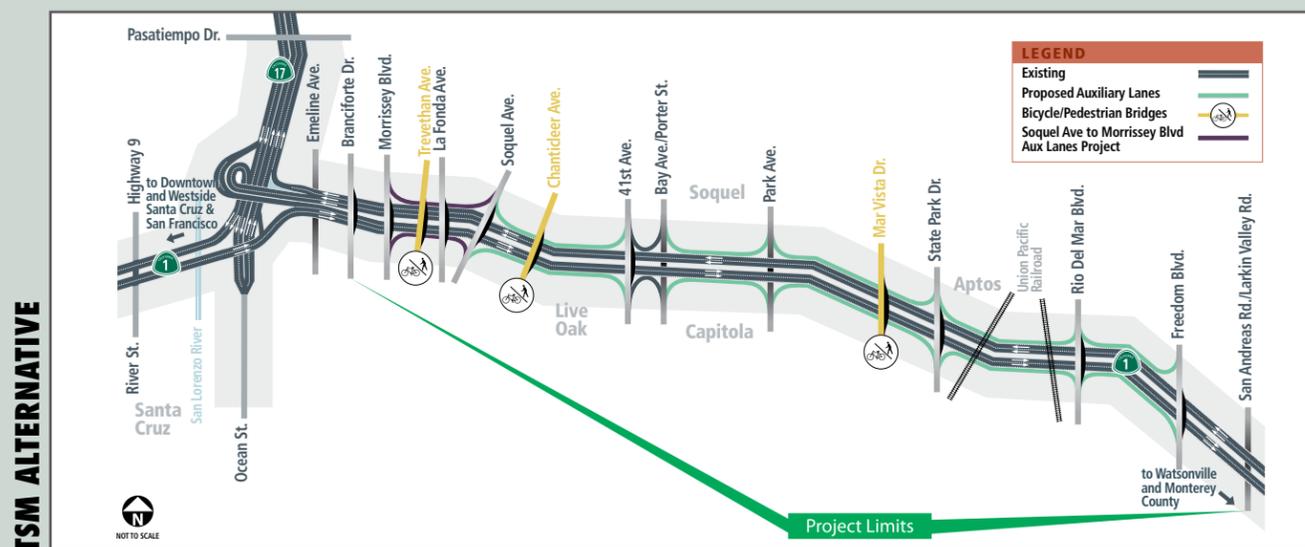
BACKGROUND

In developing the alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental document, the project team considered four conceptual alternatives, including: two HOV Lane Alternatives (one using standard design specifications and the other using design exceptions to reduce costs and impacts), a Ramp Metering and Auxiliary Lanes Alternative, and a No-Build Alternative. Since the public open houses, the project team has combined the HOV alternatives to form a single HOV Lane Alternative. The alternative previously called the Ramp Metering / Auxiliary Lanes Alternative is now the Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, which more accurately describes its various improvements.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM) ALTERNATIVE

The TSM Alternative is being evaluated as a lower-cost and potentially lower-impact strategy to reduce congestion and delay, and encourage ridesharing and transit use without full mainline freeway improvements. This alternative is categorized as "TSM" because it attempts to address the existing and projected transportation deficiencies without adding new continuous through lanes. New facilities under consideration with this alternative would include:

- Ramp metering
- HOV bypass lanes on interchange on-ramps
- Auxiliary lanes to facilitate weaving movements of traffic entering and exiting the freeway between interchanges
- New pedestrian/bicycle overcrossings
- New right-of-way in select locations along the project corridor
- Park and Ride lots as recommended in the Transit Market Analysis currently underway
- Soundwalls where appropriate to mitigate any potential noise impacts to surrounding neighborhoods
- Transportation Operations System (TOS) electronic equipment such as changeable message signs and vehicle detection systems

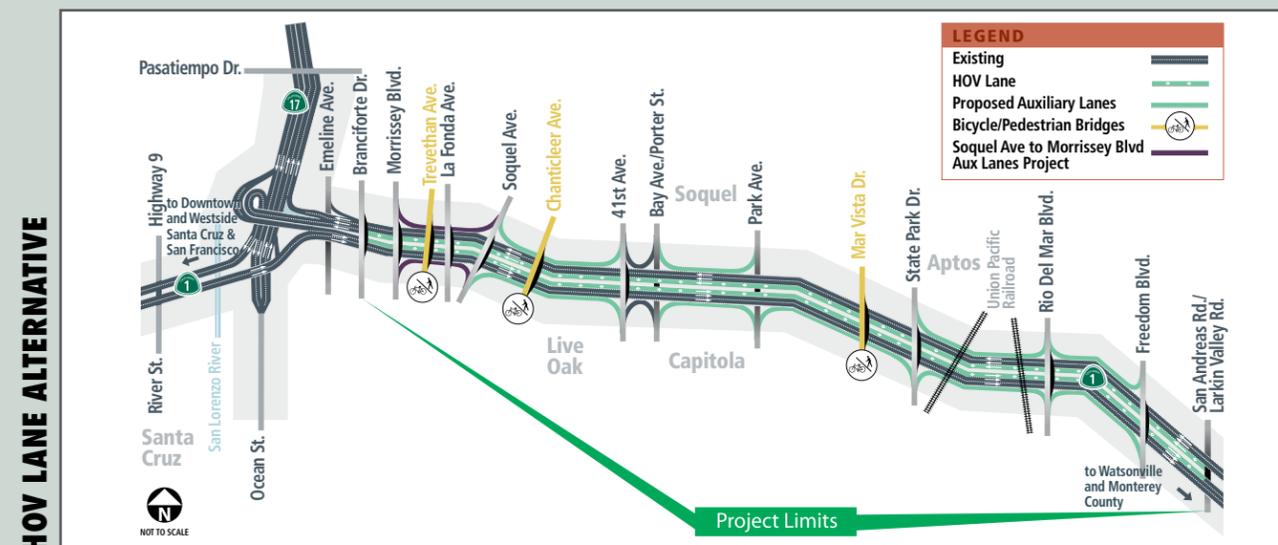


Typical Diamond Interchange Configuration

HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) LANE ALTERNATIVE

The HOV Lane Alternative would widen the existing four-lane highway to a six-lane facility by adding new northbound and southbound HOV lanes, primarily within the highway median, and new auxiliary lanes between interchanges. HOV Lane Alternative elements would include:

- All elements of the TSM Alternative (auxiliary lanes, ramp metering, HOV bypass lanes on interchange on-ramps, three new pedestrian/bike overcrossings, potential park and ride lots, soundwalls where appropriate and Transportation Operation Systems)
- Improved ramp design for all nine interchanges within the project limits, including reconstruction of certain interchanges to a diamond configuration to facilitate better movement for pedestrians, bicyclists and buses
- Widened bridges and drainage culverts extended as needed to accommodate the new HOV lanes
- New right-of-way at various locations along the project corridor
- Retaining walls where appropriate to minimize right-of-way needed and to reduce project impacts
- Transit service enhancements in addition to those incorporated in the TSM Alternative may include freeway-oriented bus stops adjacent to park and ride lots



NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No-Build Alternative includes projects being constructed or planned and funded for construction, including:

- The Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project
- The Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project

The No-Build Alternative does not address the project need and purpose. This alternative provides a basis of comparison with the two "build" alternatives in the future analysis year of 2035.

PROJECT COST AND FUNDING

The preliminary estimates indicate the cost to construct the HOV Lane Alternative (including design, right-of-way, and construction) is approximately \$400 million, in 2007 dollars. The TSM alternative would cost less. More detailed cost estimates are being prepared for these alternatives. Funding is not yet secured; local funding as well as state and federal funds will be needed. Community representatives are assessing new local funding sources to help pay for priority projects and leverage additional state and federal funds. You can learn more about this effort at: www.iftaskforce.org.

WHAT ABOUT "INDUCED TRAVEL"?

"Induced travel" is a term that has been widely used to describe the observed increase in traffic volume that occurs soon after a new highway is opened or a previously congested highway is widened. The relationship between increases in highway capacity and traffic is very complex, involving various travel behavior responses, residential and business location decisions, and changes in regional population and economic growth. While some of these responses do represent new trips, much of the observed increase in traffic comes from trips that were already being made on alternate routes or at different times of day. The net effect on region-wide daily vehicle miles of travel (VMT) resulting from these travel behavior changes is usually minimal. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has prepared a detailed study on this topic – for more information please visit the FHWA website at, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Planning/itfaq.htm>.

RELATED PROJECTS UPDATE

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

This project has been in construction approximately one year. The effort has concentrated on bridgework over Branciforte/Carbonera Creeks, pier walls, abutments, restoring the streambed, sound wall construction, earthwork grading, and median paving. The project is expected to be complete by Summer 2009. For more information on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project visit the project website at <http://www.hwy1-17.caltrans.ca.gov/>.

Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project

The California Transportation Commission awarded this project \$16.2 million in February 2007 from voter-approved Proposition 1B Transportation Bond funds to reduce congestion, improve traffic operations, and improve safety. The project will add northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 between the Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard interchanges.

The project is sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission in cooperation with Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration. A Public Information meeting will be held in the future to provide an update on the project and obtain public input. For additional information, please visit the SCCRTC website at: www.sccrtc.org/SoquelMorrissey.html.