



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

TO: Operations Committee

DATE: September 5, 2008

FR: Executive Director

W.I.: 1231

RE: Assembly Bill 15 Vasco Road Safety Study – Draft Report to Legislature

Assembly Bill 15 (Houston) required that MTC, in cooperation with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), submit a report to the State Legislature by September 30, 2008 with “recommendations to expedite approval and facilitate funding of the construction and maintenance of a median barrier on Vasco Road...” The draft report is attached for your approval.

AB 15 also required that MTC establish a policy advisory committee (PAC) with representatives from MTC and CCTA, and a technical advisory committee (TAC) with representatives from Contra Costa County and the cities of Brentwood and Oakley. The PAC met twice to set the overall direction and structure for the report. The TAC met four times and took guidance from the PAC in preparing the report. In addition, staff provided an in-person status report to Assemblyman Guy Houston in mid-August.

Vasco Road Project and Background

The proposed Vasco Road Safety Improvement Project would construct a 2-foot wide median barrier with additional shoulder width on a 2.5-mile segment of Vasco Road in Contra Costa County. If full funding for the 2.5-mile project is not available, a shorter 1-mile barrier can be constructed that will provide useful safety benefits. The cost of the 2.5-mile project is estimated to be \$38 million, but could be reduced to \$18 million if a shorter 1-mile barrier is constructed. The project is currently at 65% design, and could begin construction in about 18 months. The project environmental study is now underway. Three funding sources have been committed to the project.

Total Preliminary Project Cost: \$18 to \$38 million
(In 2011 dollars, escalated at 5% per year)

Funding Currently Available: \$8.15 million
Measure J/Developers Fee: \$0.65 million
Earmark: \$0.50 million
Prop 1B: \$7.0 million

Unfunded Amount: \$10 to \$30 million

Since 2003, Contra Costa County has been making safety improvements on Vasco Road. The following improvements have decreased the number of collisions in the project area.

- Signing and striping added for aerial enforcement at the request of the CHP from Walnut Boulevard to County line (August 2003)
- Double yellow no passing zones added at various locations (August 2003)
- Shoulder grading to remove sight distance obstruction (February 2004)
- Active Feedback Speed Signage Installed (April 2004)
- Intersection improvements at Camino Diablo completed (April 2004)
- Median and shoulder rumble strip completed with vertical delineators in the median for one-mile test section (October 2004)
- Safety Corridor Signs (January 2005)
- Over 800 additional vertical delineators placed in the median, along with median and shoulder rumble strips , for a length of 12.4 miles, except near Camino Diablo (September 2005, replaced in November 2007)

Report Findings

Staff considered several sources to fund the shortfall including local sales tax and fees, State Transportation Improvement Program, and federal Surface Transportation Program and other federal funding opportunities. At this time, the County has yet to finalize the schedule and cost of the project, mainly due to uncertainties surrounding potential environmental mitigation that may be required pending the environmental studies process. Once the schedule and cost are firmer, the County can examine which funding sources best fit with the project's needs.

Most funding sources identified may not be available in the required timeframe for Vasco Road safety improvements. While CCTA and East Contra Costa County Regional Fee and Financing Authority could theoretically provide sales tax and fee funds, respectively, these two sources are already fully programmed and oversubscribed, so the administering agencies would have to delete other projects to fund Vasco Road. For instance, the local jurisdictions that receive funding from Measure J used for rehabilitation and maintenance projects could instead use those funds for Vasco Road safety improvements, but would then have to find alternate funding to backfill the rehabilitation projects removed from the Measure J program.

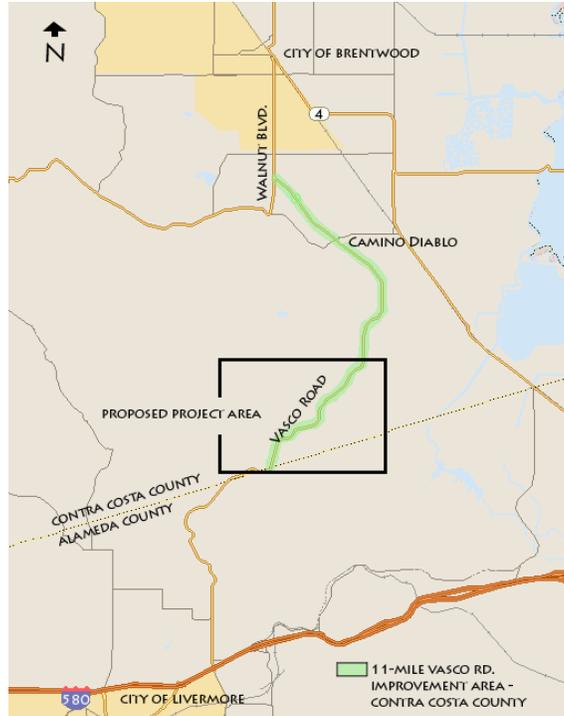
With no new funding for the Vasco Road median barrier project in the foreseeable future, the report recommends that the County work with local jurisdictions including CCTA, Alameda County, and cities to prioritize Vasco Road over other area projects. In the past few years, these agencies have prioritized state highway corridors such as Highway 4 and Interstate 580, and, as a result, have secured funds to complete those improvements. Prioritization of Vasco Road over other projects could mean seeking additional funds through the Proposition 1B State-Local Partnership Program, or making Vasco Road first in line for any potential cost savings in various locally controlled programs. The report also recommends that the County pursue other state and federal funding opportunities that may not yet exist though close partnership with the County's state and federal legislators.

Steve Heminger

SH: JM

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Vasco Road Median Barrier Project – Vicinity Map



Vasco Road Median Barrier Project – Project Detail

