

California State Legislature – Assembly Bill 15

Vasco Road Median Barrier Project

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared by:

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

In cooperation with:

Contra Costa County Transportation Authority
Contra Costa County Public Works Department
City of Brentwood Public Works Department
City of Oakley Public Works Department

September 12, 2008



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	History & Background	3
III.	Project Description	6
IV.	Funding Sources Considered	11
V.	Recommended Next Steps	16
VI.	Assembly Bill 15 text	17

I. INTRODUCTION

Assembly Bill 15 (Houston)

Assembly Bill 15 requires that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (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 complete text of AB 15 is provided in the appendix of this report.

Policy and Technical Advisory Committees

AB 15 also requires that MTC establish a policy committee with representatives from MTC and CCTA, and a Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from Contra Costa County and the cities of Brentwood and Oakley. The PAC set the overall direction and structure for the report, meeting two times on March 19th and July 16th, 2008. The Technical Advisory Committee, which met four times during the process of preparing this report on April 4th, May 30th, June 23rd, and July 21st 2008, took guidance from the PAC to prepare the report. We appreciate the time commitment and recognize the following individuals for their contribution to this report.

Policy Advisory Committee

Commissioner Federal Glover	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Commissioner Amy Worth	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Commissioner Dave Hudson	Contra Costa Transportation Authority
Commissioner Brad Nix	Contra Costa Transportation Authority
Commissioner Karen Stepper (alternate)	Contra Costa Transportation Authority

Technical Advisory Committee

Albert Yee	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Ross McKeown	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Jaime Maldonado	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Kenneth Kao	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Susan Miller	Contra Costa Transportation Authority
Julie Bueren	Contra Costa County, (Public Works Department)
Steve Kowalewski	Contra Costa County
Christopher Lau	Contra Costa County
Steve Kersevan	City of Brentwood
Bailey Grewal	City of Brentwood
Jason Vogan	City of Oakley

Report Organization

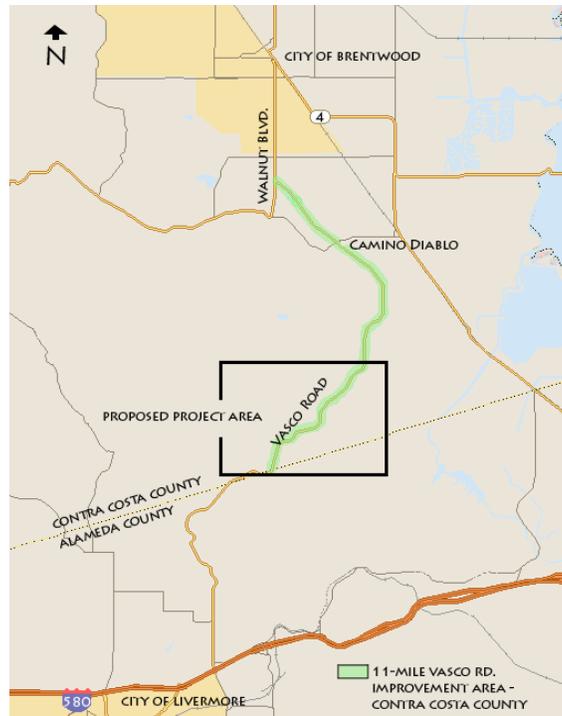
- **History & Background.** This section of the report provides an account of the work that has been accomplished to improve Vasco Road and a summary of historical traffic volume and collision data.

- **Project Description.** The Project Description details the proposed median barrier project that will be used as the basis for analysis to provide the recommendations that are required as part of this Report. This section of the report also discuss the project phasing that may take place dependent on the funding levels secured for the project.
- **Funding Sources Considered.** A comprehensive review was conducted of potential funding sources for the proposed median barrier project. Timing of funding, amounts available, and limitations are described in this section.
- **Recommended Next Steps.** Options to fund the shortfall for the Vasco Road project are presented, based on constraints and flexibility of existing sources.

II. HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Project Location and Information

Vasco Road is a north/south arterial between Walnut Blvd. near Brentwood in Contra Costa County and Tesla Road in Alameda County. Vasco Road is eleven miles in length within Contra Costa County, and in general, consists of one 12-foot lane in each direction with 6-8 foot outside shoulders. There are two three-lane sections for truck climbing and passing in the southbound direction. There are no passing lanes in the northbound direction. The posted speed limit is 55 mph.



Prior to the late 1990's, Vasco Road was a narrow country road connecting the communities of Livermore in Alameda County with Brentwood in Contra Costa County. Within Contra Costa County, the roadway generally followed the alignment of Kellogg Creek. Construction of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir by Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) on Kellogg Creek required the relocation of the entire length of Vasco Road in the county. Upon completion in 1996, CCWD transferred the new road to Contra Costa County. The new roadway alignment is to the east of the previous alignment and was designed to a higher standard than the superseded facility.

Since the 1990's, commute traffic on Vasco Road has increased steadily due to residential growth in Eastern Contra Costa County and employment in the Tri-Valley (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties) and Silicon Valley in Santa Clara County. Vasco Road north of I-580 now is a major commuter and truck route, serving as an alternative to the congested I-680 and SR 4 corridors. Average daily traffic has increased from 16,000 vehicles per day in 1996 to 22,500 in 2006, and is expected to continue to grow as more people move into the eastern part of the County. Projected daily volumes on Vasco Road are expected to be approximately 25,400 in the year 2012 (assuming a traffic volume increase of 2% per year).

Collision Data

A number of collisions involving injuries and multiple fatalities along Vasco Road caused the community to advocate for safety improvements on this increasingly traveled corridor. In 2003, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors formed the Vasco Road Safety Task Force to specifically address these concerns.

- January 1996 to December 2007
 - 351 collisions, highest year was 2003 with 41 collisions.
 - 136 injury collisions
 - 7 fatal collisions
- Since 1996, 15 people have died on Vasco Road in Contra Costa County (up to December 2007). The collision data shows a higher number of collisions in the southern part of the roadway where there are more curves, hilly terrain and a merge from two lanes to one in the southbound direction.
- January 2002 – September 2004 (2 years and 7 months prior to installation of rumble strips and delineators) – 102 collisions, 36 injury collisions, 4 fatal collisions.
- October 2004 – December 2007 (3 years and 3 months after installation of rumble strips and delineators) – 91 collisions, 32 injury collisions, 3 fatal collisions.

Vasco Road 2004 Engineering Analysis

In December 2003, the Contra Costa County Public Works Department initiated a study to develop recommendations for safety improvements on Vasco Road. The study was coordinated with the City of Brentwood, Caltrans, California Highway Patrol (CHP) and East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (ECCCFPD) staff.

In March 2004, county staff presented recommendations to the Vasco Road Safety Task Force. A series of safety improvements were suggested, ranging from additional signage and striping to barrier-separating the roadway. The estimated costs ranged from \$1 million to \$94 million. With funding on the magnitude of \$94 million unavailable, the recommendation that could be implemented immediately was to install median and shoulder rumble strips.

Improvements Made to Date

In 2004, in conjunction with a routine pavement maintenance project, Contra Costa County constructed the recommended rumble strips. Also as part of this project, flexible median delineators were installed in a test section near the Brushy Creek area where there was a history of cross-median incidents. Other subsequent safety improvements include the addition of warning signs and increased law enforcement. The following is a summary of the improvements made to date:

- 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)

Adopted Policy Actions

The following is a summary of adopted policy actions:

- Contra Costa and Alameda County Boards of Supervisors designated Vasco Road a “Daylight Headlight Test Area”. Later created and signed. (October 2003)
- Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors designated Vasco Road as a Safety Corridor and established the Vasco Road Safety Task Force.
- Senate Bill 3 sponsored by Senator Torlakson and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger designated Vasco Road as a “double-fine zone”.
- Assembly Bill 15 sponsored by Assemblyman Houston directs MTC and CCTA to study funding recommendations for construction of a median barrier on Vasco Road.

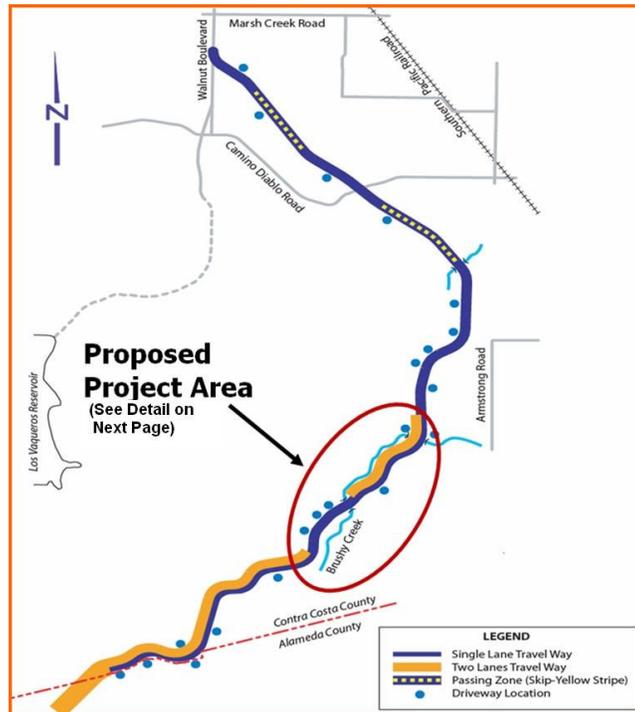
III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

There remains a strong desire to use a concrete barrier to separate opposing directions of vehicular traffic on Vasco Road. The Contra Costa County Public Works Department has identified a safety project in a segment that has experienced a number of cross median collisions, known as the Brushy Creek area, located at the southerly end of Vasco Road near the Contra Costa/Alameda County line. This area contains two three-lane segments that allow for truck climbing and passing in the southbound direction, and are separated by a two-lane segment.

Project Scope

This proposed project will widen and construct a concrete median barrier along Vasco Road beginning approximately three miles north of the Contra Costa/Alameda County line. The existing two-lane segment (approximately 1 mile) will be widened to provide a southbound passing lane and concrete median barrier. The existing three-lane segment, north of the two-lane segment (approximately 1.5 miles), will be widened to provide a pavement width necessary to construct a median barrier while maintaining the current number of travel lanes. Associated signing, striping, turn pockets and barrier end-treatments will be constructed as necessary to accommodate the installation of median barriers. Two bridge widenings at Brushy Creek will be required to accommodate the median barriers.

It was determined that the elimination of the truck climbing and passing lanes in order to provide space for a concrete median barrier would cause additional traffic delays. In addition, given the number of curves and hilly terrain in the southern-most three-lane segment, the installation of concrete median barrier in that segment would be very costly. Therefore, the two-lane segment and the three-lane segment to its north were determined to be the area in which this project could be implemented.



A design consultant was retained by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on February 27, 2007 and has proceeded with the development of the project. The actual limits of the project will depend upon available funding at the time of construction. The minimum project scope would involve widening the existing two-lane segment to provide a continuous southbound passing lane and installation of one mile of concrete median barrier. Should additional funding become available, installation of the median barrier will extend into the northerly three-lane segment, along with any associated widening of the highway that is required.

Estimated Project Cost

The cost of the project ranges from approximately \$18 million for the shortest project, to \$38 million for the larger preferred project. Ideally, the County would like to be under construction in fiscal year 2010-11. The funding recommendations in this report will address funding availability as it relates to the preferred construction start year.

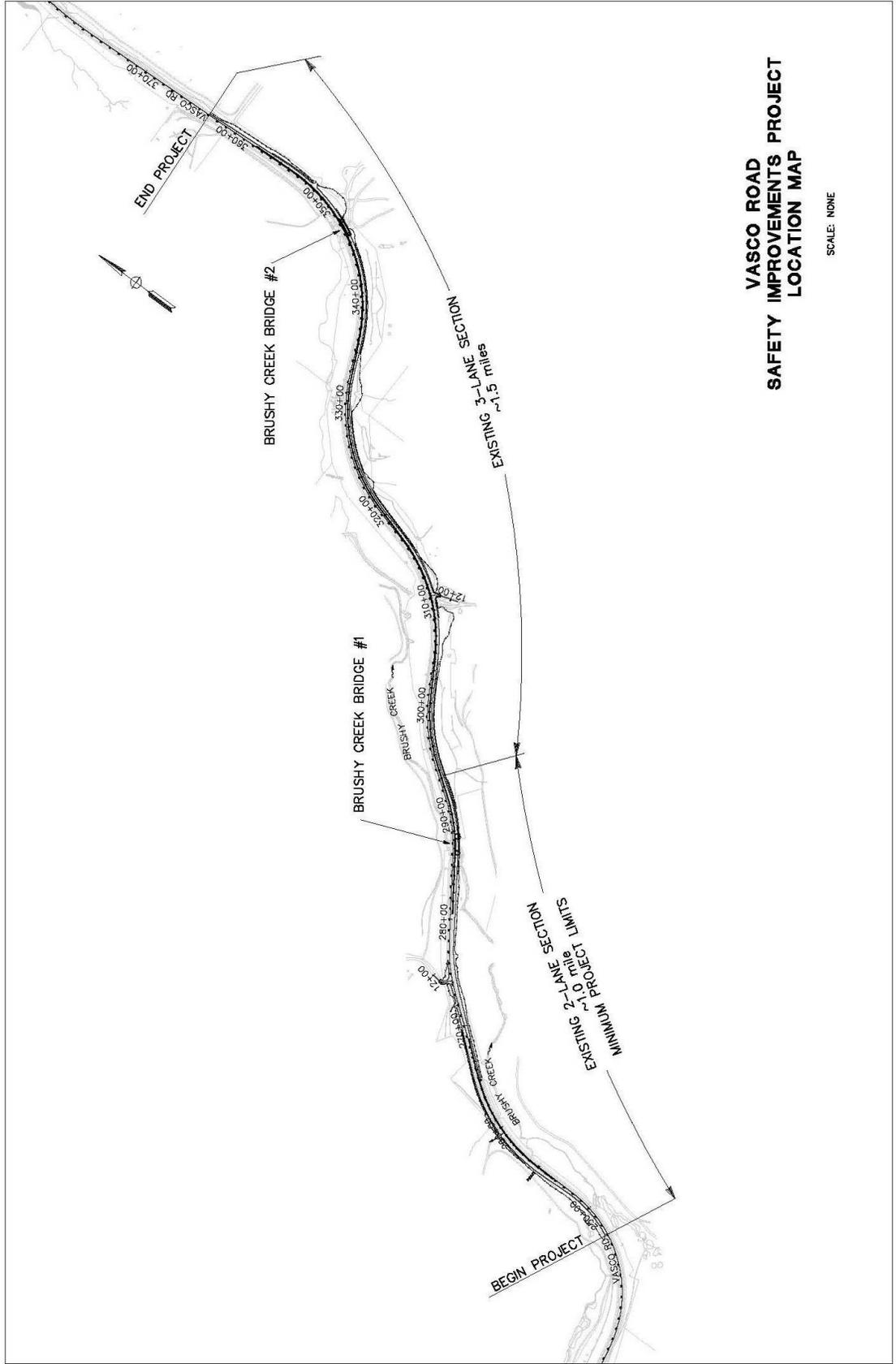
Available Funding

Contra Costa County currently has three funding sources committed to the project. The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) has committed \$0.65 million in Measure J Transportation Sales Tax funds. Additionally, the County has secured \$0.50 million in federal earmarked appropriations for the Vasco Road project. Finally, in 2006, California voters approved Proposition 1B, which included funding for local streets and roads. The County has dedicated \$7.0 million in Proposition 1B Local Streets funding to the project. These three funding sources total \$8.15 million. The actual amount may be different than \$8.15 million due to the difference in federal appropriation versus actual obligation authority. Obligation authority is the actual amount an agency may expend, and is generally 85% of the appropriation.

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



**VASCO ROAD
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
LOCATION MAP**

SCALE: NONE

Project Phasing

The following table describes variations of the project should funding for the full proposed project not be available at the start of construction. The project can be phased into the segments shown in grey and italics so that portions of the project can move forward as at an incremental basis. The amount of available funding for the project will have a direct impact on the project schedule.

Phasing	Phasing Description	Estimated Cost
Proposed Project	Project length is approximately 2.5 miles. The project will construct a 2-mile concrete barrier (approximately 2 miles) and close a southbound 1-mile passing lane gap for a total continuous passing lane of 5.5 miles; associated pavement improvements, retaining walls, two bridge widenings, drainage improvements, clean water improvements, access improvements, and transitions.	\$38 million
<i>Median Barrier</i>	<i>If there are not enough funds to build the additional 1.5 miles of remaining barrier not included in the Minimum Project, then a smaller portion of the barrier could be constructed. The approximate cost for each additional ½ mile of median barrier is \$4.9 million.</i>	<i>\$4.9 million per ½ mile</i>
<i>Widening at Brushy Creek Bridge #2</i>	<i>If the last 0.5 miles of the median barrier is constructed, Brushy Creek Bridge #2 will also need to be widened at an approximate cost of \$1.3 million.</i>	<i>\$1.3 million</i>
Minimum Project	Project length is approximately 1 mile. The project will construct a 1-mile concrete barrier and close a southbound 1-mile passing lane gap for a total continuous passing lane of 5.5 miles; associated pavement improvements, retaining walls, one bridge widening (Brushy Creek Bridge #1), drainage improvements, clean water improvements, access improvements, and transitions.	\$18 million

Project Status

The Contra Costa County Public Works Department is currently in the preliminary engineering and environmental phases of this project. The design is approaching 65% design review and environmental review and studies are being conducted. The environmental document will cover both state and federal requirements in order to qualify the project for both state and federal funds. However, environmental documents generally require re-validation after three to five years. The

County estimates that the environmental process will be complete in 2009, which means the County would have until 2014 to complete full project build-out under this environmental document. Environmental studies include biological, archaeology, habitat, and migration studies in support of CEQA and NEPA clearances, and are being conducted in consultation with federal and state regulators. Design and environmental review is estimated to be complete in 2009 awaiting funding to proceed with right-of-way and construction phases.

IV. FUNDING SOURCES CONSIDERED

The funding shortfall for the proposed Vasco Road project ranges from \$10 million to \$30 million depending on the length of barrier constructed. In the San Francisco Bay Area, there are generally four major public funding sources for transportation projects: local, regional, state, and federal funds. Private funding, including private funds used for Public-Private Partnerships, was not examined as this generally precludes the use of state funds.

Local Funds

Local funds encompass any variety of locally controlled funds, including sales tax, local property tax, local general fund, and local developer fees. Contra Costa County voters approved Measure J in November 2004, which continues the half-percent countywide sales tax for transportation first approved as Measure C. Over the 25-year life span of Measure J, CCTA expects it to generate \$1.98 billion in 2004 dollars. Vasco Road is an eligible project in the East County Corridor category of Measure J as approved by the voters. Currently, Vasco Road has \$0.65 million in escalated dollars of available funding from this source, which will be available at the time of construction. Currently, there are no additional Measure J funds identified for this project in the first seven years of Measure J. Measure J also includes an 18% "return to source" pot of funds which generates about \$2 million annually for Contra Costa County. These funds are already committed to local road rehabilitation and maintenance. However, the County has expressed willingness to defer rehabilitation and maintenance projects if they are close to having enough funding for the Vasco project.

Cities and Counties also receive gas tax revenues through subventions and Proposition 42. These funds are generally used for maintenance of local streets and roads, but may also be used for expansion and safety projects on the local streets and roads network. Contra Costa County is forecast to receive about \$420 million in gas tax revenues over the next 25 years. Due to critical maintenance needs, the County has already dedicated all gas tax revenues it receives from the State to maintain the current local streets and roads network. The maintenance needs of the roads network exceed the available funding from locally generated funds and gas tax revenues. Therefore, beyond the already committed Proposition 1B funds, the County is unable to commit gas tax funds for the Vasco project at this time. Future Proposition 1B Local Streets funding are already dedicated to other county safety priorities such as Marsh Creek Road. In total, the County expects to receive about \$24 million from the Proposition 1B Local Streets fund source. Additionally, the County must spend its Proposition 1B Local Streets funding within three years of state allocation of funds, or the County will lose the funds. This puts pressure on the County to fully fund the Vasco Road safety project, or risk losing funding already secured for the project.

Eastern Contra Costa also has a regional developer fee program, funded through the East Contra Costa Regional Fee and Financing Authority (ECCRFFA). ECCRFFA is expected to generate about \$210 million over twenty years starting in 2003, based on development assumptions in 2002. ECCRFFA has already funded one project in the northern section of Vasco Road, and no additional funds are identified for the median barrier project. Due to the current economic crises in the housing industry, expected revenues have come in much lower than anticipated, causing a shortfall of revenues against currently programmed projects. This shortfall makes cost savings on other ECCRFFA projects unlikely as a funding source for the Vasco project, since any savings would be used to fund the shortfall.

Regional Funds

The major source of regional funding comes from bridge tolls on the seven State-owned bridges in the Bay Area. These Regional Measures (RM), however, generally support projects that alleviate congestion or make other improvements in the bridge corridors. Additionally, almost all RM projects are specifically identified in state statute, MTC's Resolution 3434 (Regional Transit Expansion Program), or the Bay Area Toll Authority RM1 and toll bridge rehabilitation program. Unless there is a bridge toll increase, toll revenues do not appear to be a viable source of funding for this project.

State Funds

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a five-year state program that is specifically for highway and road needs. The STIP is split between two sub-programs: the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). Regional agencies have programming authority for the RTIP, which accounts for 75% of the STIP, while Caltrans has programming authority for the remaining 25% for the ITIP. While MTC serves as the regional programming body for the RTIP, MTC allows each county congestion management agency (CMA) to propose projects for their county share. Contra Costa County's CMA is CCTA. Historically, Contra Costa County's share has varied between \$15 million to \$30 million per year, though in recent years, this amount has been in the lower end of the range due to dwindling state resources. In previous RTIPs, CCTA has proposed projects that improve the State Highway System, such as the SR-24 Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore and the SR-4 Widening projects. The Vasco Road project is eligible for funding from the STIP. However, since the 2008 STIP has just been adopted in May 2008, the next round of STIP funding will not be available until the 2010 STIP. The 2010 STIP will have funds available in the last two years of the five year program, meaning funds from the STIP would not be available until FY 2013-14 or FY 2014-15. It should be noted that the CCTA has a policy commitment to use funds from the next five STIPs for projects outside of East County, in order to offset the dedication of all revenues from a 2015 Measure J bond issue to the eBART project. Therefore, under current CCTA policy, the earliest the Vasco Road project would be eligible for STIP programming is in the 2020 STIP, which has funding available in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25.

Even if CCTA's policy regarding East County projects in the next five STIPs were not in place, the two new years of the 2010 STIP would still be too late for the County to meet the FY 2010-11 target date. However, there are a few alternatives the County may pursue to advance the funds, should CCTA program the project in the 2010 STIP. First, the County and CCTA could request that a project already programmed in FY 2010-11 be delayed to a later year, and advance the Vasco Road project to fill the FY 2010-11 capacity. Alternatively, the County could request an AB 3090 arrangement with the California Transportation Commission (CTC) where the County would spend its own local funds to construct the project in FY 2010-11, and be reimbursed in cash in a fiscal year after FY 2013-14. This would require that the County have enough cash to front the project. Also, the CTC has been historically reluctant to approve AB 3090 cash reimbursements, as they are referred to, because these arrangements put a strain on limited state resources.

While SB 802 (Torlakson, 2003) made State Route 239 and Route 84 between I-580 and State Route 4 a part of the Interregional Road System, Vasco Road is not a state highway and therefore ineligible to receive ITIP funding. Additionally, since Vasco Road is not a state highway, it is also not eligible for the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP), which the State uses to fund safety and preservation projects on the State Highway System. In order for Vasco Road to qualify for ITIP and SHOPP funds, the County must first bring Vasco Road to state highway standards at its own cost, request that

Caltrans include it as a state highway, and have the CTC amend Vasco Road into the State Highway System (as State Route 84, which currently does not exist physically between I-580 and State Route 4).

Proposition 1B (2006) also included \$1 billion for the State-Local Partnership Program (SLPP), which encourages cooperative projects between State and local governments. The goal of the SLPP is to leverage locally-generated dollars (such as those from sales taxes) on a one-to-one basis to construct high-priority projects that have funding shortfalls. Currently, the SLPP is awaiting various trailer bills in the Legislature that would define which funds are eligible to be used as match for the bond funds and how the funds will be distributed. It is expected that some agreement will be reached by the end of 2008, and these funds would then be available within the next two to three years. CCTA, as the agency responsible for the sales tax measure, would be eligible to compete for SLPP funds. Under current forecasts, CCTA could potentially receive about \$20 million from the SLPP. This would be a viable fund source to partially fund the improvements on Vasco Road, though it would have to compete with other county priorities, such as other improvements on the State Highway System and transit improvements such as eBART to Eastern Contra Costa County.

Federal Funds

Two competitive federal funds sources were investigated for the Vasco Road project. The first is the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). The County has applied for funding from HSIP, but will not know if it is successful until next year. However, drawbacks of the HSIP program include the maximum grant amount of \$900,000 and timely use of funds – the County must finish construction of the project within three years of inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program. In California, there was \$32 million available in FY 2007-08 and \$54 million in FY 2008-09. The second fund source is the High Risk Rural Roads (HR3) program. Unfortunately, the County has already examined this fund source and has determined that Vasco Road does not qualify as a rural road for the purposes of the HR3 program. The HR3 program also has a maximum grant amount of \$900,000.

The region also has Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds that are eligible for use on projects such as Vasco Road. However, the Bay Area STP program is fully utilized through the end of SAFETEA (FY 2008-09), and may actually have more projects programmed than available obligation authority. Additional funds may be available in the next federal transportation act. It is unclear at this time what programs will remain in the next act, but it is highly likely that the Vasco Road project would need to compete against other county and regional projects for STP funding should the program be continued in the next act. Additionally, the region has committed STP funds to roadway rehabilitation projects and other priorities as being considered in MTC's 2009 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), commonly known as Transportation 2035 (T2035). In previous STP cycles, while grant amounts in the STP program may range as high as \$10 million, most projects are for rehabilitation and range from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Given that T2035 gives priority to rehabilitation projects to use STP funds, it is unlikely that Vasco Road safety improvements would be selected for funding through the new STP program.

SUMMARY of FUNDING CONSIDERED

Category	Funding Source	Comments or Action	Potential Funding
Local	Measure J Funding	Measure J already over-subscribed in the near term. New funding from Measure J unlikely.	\$0 (in near term)
	Measure J 18% <i>"Return to Source"</i>	County could defer maintenance to contribute some funds if close to fully funded project.	\$1-\$2 million
	ECCRFFA	ECCRFFA already over-subscribed in the near term. New funding from ECCRFFA unlikely.	\$0 (in near term)
	Gas Tax Subventions	County already fully using to fund critical street maintenance needs.	\$0
Regional	Regional Measure Funds	The program is fully committed.	\$0
State	Proposition 1B State Local Partnership Program	Vasco Road is eligible. CCTA to set countywide priorities for SLPP funding.	\$3-\$5 million
	Proposition 1B Local Streets	County already programmed future Local Streets funding to other safety priorities in the County.	\$0
	SHOPP	Vasco Road is ineligible for SHOPP because it is not a signed state highway.	\$0
	ITIP	Vasco Road is ineligible for ITIP Funds because it is not a signed state highway.	\$0
	2020 RTIP	Under current CCTA policy, Vasco Road is eligible to receive RTIP funding in the 2020 RTIP cycle.	\$0 (in near term)
	AB 3090 of RTIP	If CCTA programs Vasco in 2010 RTIP, they may request an AB 3090 amendment to allow allocation in an earlier year.	\$1 million (exchange only)

Federal	Future Federal Funding Opportunities	CCTA and Contra Costa Public Works will meet with local Congressional delegation to determine how to proceed with other federal funding opportunities.	\$5 -\$10 million
	Surface Transportation Program (STP)	County to work with CCTA and MTC to include Vasco in the CCTA Countywide Plan and prioritize in the RTP. Funding exchange possible with County rehabilitation project using local funds.	\$1 million (exchange only)
	High Risk Rural Roads (HR3)	Vasco Road is ineligible because it is not federally classified as a rural route.	\$0
	Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	County has already applied for funding, maximum grant amount is \$900,000.	\$0.9 million

V. RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The funding sources listed above provide some options to contribute to the Vasco Road project's funding plan. Sources considered for additional funds include local sales tax and fees, state STIP, and federal STP 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 that are potentially available for the Vasco Road project may not have funds available in the desired timeframe. While CCTA and ECCRFFA could theoretically provide sales tax and fee funds, respectively, these two sources are already fully programmed and over-subscribed. The administering agencies would have to delete other projects or otherwise create additional capacity in the same general area to fund Vasco Road. For instance, CCTA could program a Measure J project scheduled to go to construction in 2014 in the 2010 STIP, which would free up Measure J capacity for Vasco Road. Or, the local jurisdictions that receive Measure J "18%" funding typically used for rehabilitation and maintenance projects could use those funds instead for Vasco Road safety improvements.

The County should work closely with its Congressional delegation to prioritize Vasco Road for additional funding opportunities that may be available on the federal level. With the cooperation of local cities and other jurisdictions in Alameda County, the County can strongly advocate for the safety improvement project to receive new federal funds in the near future.

It is also recommended that the County continue to cooperate with its local area partners including CCTA, Alameda County, and cities to prioritize Vasco Road over other area projects. In the past few years, the local area has prioritized state highway corridors such as Highway 4 and Interstate 580, and, as a result, has secured funds to complete those improvements. Prioritization of Vasco Road could mean additional funds through the Proposition 1B State-Local Partnership Program, and make Vasco first in line for any potential cost savings in various locally controlled programs or new funding sources such as the SLPP.

Finally, there are legislative actions that could expedite funding for Vasco Road. The legislature could create additional funding sources to augment the limited pot of funds for transportation improvements. Potential new sources include a Vehicle Licensing Fee (VLF) levy and an increase in the gas tax. Also, AB 2558 (Feuer), if approved, would allow the region to levy a fee on gas or a VLF for the purposes of greenhouse gas emission reduction. MTC is seeking an amendment so that local road rehabilitation and maintenance would also be an eligible category for funding. These new funds could be used in an exchange with more flexible funds to augment the project's funding. With a united front among all parties to support safety improvements on Vasco Road, the County should also be able to secure funds to expedite and complete this important project.

V. APPENDIX
ASSEMBLY BILL 15 TEXT

BILL NUMBER: AB 15

CHAPTER 484
FILED WITH SECRETARY OF STATE OCTOBER 11, 2007
APPROVED BY GOVERNOR OCTOBER 11, 2007
PASSED THE SENATE SEPTEMBER 10, 2007
PASSED THE ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 11, 2007
AMENDED IN SENATE SEPTEMBER 6, 2007
AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 30, 2007
AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 20, 2007
AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 1, 2007
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 1, 2007

INTRODUCED BY Assembly Member Houston
(Coauthor: Senator Torlakson)

DECEMBER 4, 2006

An act to add and repeal Section 66537 of the Government Code, relating to Vasco Road.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 15, Houston. Metropolitan Transportation Commission: Vasco Road.

Existing law creates the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as a local area planning agency to provide comprehensive regional transportation planning for the San Francisco Bay area counties.

This bill would require the commission, in cooperation with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, on or before September 30, 2008, to conduct a study and submit a report to the Legislature containing recommendations to expedite approval and facilitate funding of the construction and maintenance of a median barrier on a specified portion of Vasco Road in Contra Costa County. The bill would authorize the commission to request funding to cover the cost of that study, as specified, and would also require the commission to establish a policy committee and a technical advisory committee, as specified.

Because the bill would require local agencies to perform additional duties, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions for costs mandated by the state pursuant to this act, but would recognize that local agencies and school districts may pursue any available remedies to seek reimbursement for these costs.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

(a) Vasco Road, linking the residential communities of Brentwood, Oakley, and the adjacent unincorporated communities in Contra Costa County with the Alameda County employment centers in the Cities of Livermore, Pleasanton, and Dublin, has emerged as an important regional travel corridor.

(b) Vasco Road is a two-lane county road that has poor geometry and sight distance, and is currently used by 22,000 vehicles per day. Local studies forecast that travel will grow substantially on that road during the next few years.

SEC. 2. Section 66537 is added to the Government Code, to read:

66537. (a) On or before September 30, 2008, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in cooperation with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, shall conduct a study and submit a report to the Legislature that includes recommendations to expedite approval and facilitate funding of the construction and maintenance of a median barrier on Vasco Road between the Alameda County border and the intersection of Vasco Road and Camino Diablo in Contra Costa County.

(b) The commission may request funding from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to cover the costs of the study specified in subdivision (a). To the extent that such funding is not provided, the commission shall use its existing resources to complete the study.

(c) The commission shall establish a policy committee that includes representatives from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and the commission.

(d) The commission shall establish a technical advisory committee to advise the policy committee specified in subdivision (c). The technical advisory committee shall include representatives from the county government of Contra Costa County, the city governments of the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley, and other entities specified by the commission.

(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2010, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code for costs mandated by the state pursuant to this act. It is recognized, however, that a local agency or school district may pursue any remedies to obtain reimbursement available to it under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) and any other provisions of law.