
PRESENTATION**STAFF REPORT**

DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2009
TO: EL DORADO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: DAN BOLSTER, SENIOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNER
SUBJECT: STATE ROUTE 49 REALIGNMENT STUDY

REQUESTED ACTION

None. This item is for information and/or discussion only.

BACKGROUND

On January 10, 2008, EDCTC submitted an application to Caltrans for a 2008/2009 Partnership Planning Grant to fund the State Route 49 Realignment Study – Coloma to El Dorado. On August 29, 2008, Caltrans notified EDCTC that the State Route 49 Realignment Study had been selected for funding in Fiscal Year 2008/2009 with an award of \$250,000. On December 11, 2008, T.Y. Lin International was awarded the contract to develop the State Route 49 Realignment Study.

Public involvement and outreach are major components of the State Route 49 Realignment Study. In an effort to involve a broad range of potentially affected interests, the following groups/entities were ratified on February 5, April 2, and June 4, 2009, as members of the State Route 49 Realignment Study Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

- Broadway Village Association
- California Outdoors
- California State Parks – Gold Fields District
- California Trucking Association
- Coloma Lotus Valley Community Association
- El Dorado Citizens for Smart Growth
- El Dorado County Office of Education
- El Dorado Youth Commission
- El Dorado County Parks and Recreation Commission
- El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce
- El Dorado County Historical Society
- El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services
- El Dorado Union High School District
- Farm Trails
- Friends of the Diamond Springs – El Dorado Community
- Greenstone Country Owners Association
- No Gridlock Committee
- Placerville Downtown Association
- Placerville Drive Business Association
- Sierra Club Maidu Group
- Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County
- Trails Now

The purpose of the SAC is to provide both policy and technical guidance to the EDCTC during the development of the State Route 49 Realignment Study. The project scope of work included six SAC meetings and two public open houses. The schedule for the SAC meetings and two public open houses was:

SAC Meeting #1	February 25, 2009
SAC Meeting #2	March 30, 2009
Open House #1	April 30, 2008
SAC Meeting #3	May 18, 2009
SAC Meeting #4	June 24, 2009
SAC Meeting #5	July 22, 2009
SAC Meeting #6	September 28, 2009
Open House #2	October 14, 2009

DISCUSSION

Following the February and March 2009 SAC meetings and April 2009 Public Open House, 52 alternative alignments were submitted to EDCTC for evaluation during the Level 1, Intermediate Level 1, and Level 2 Screening processes. The 52 potential alternative alignments were evaluated during the Level 1 Screening based on how well each alternative met the project Purpose and Need and its constructability and operational feasibility. Alternatives were scored on a basic “Yes” or “No” scoring. The project Purpose and Need reads:

PURPOSE AND NEED

State Route 49 (SR 49) provides a regional and interregional route for the movement of goods and people within El Dorado County. The purpose of the SR 49 Realignment Study is to evaluate potential alternative alignments for the safe and efficient transport of goods and people (i.e. tourists and local traffic) along SR 49 from Coloma to the community of El Dorado while minimizing impacts to historic, cultural, and natural resources.

The study is needed to evaluate potential alignments that will eliminate the existing alignment of SR 49 through Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and the at-grade intersection of SR 49 and Route 50 and will respond to current and projected regional and local traffic demand on the state and local road systems along SR 49 and U.S. Highway 50, especially through densely populated residential areas and the business districts of the City of Placerville and the communities of Coloma, Diamond Springs, and El Dorado. The sharp curves and steep grades of the existing alignment within the study area, in conjunction with the commercial traffic combined with regional and local traffic, are not adequate for modern transportation demands, resulting in congestion and reduced traffic safety for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian travel. The study will focus on the use of existing roads to reduce the amount of resources necessary to achieve improved conditions in the SR 49 corridor and support the adopted general plans of El Dorado County, the City of Placerville, and Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

As a result of the Level 1 Screening, ten alternatives were recommended for advancement to the Intermediate Level 1 Screening. The goal of the Intermediate Level 1 Screening was to reduce the list of ten alternative alignments down to three. The ten alternatives were evaluated based on how well they met the Purpose and Need and were scored from one to four (weighted) according to the following point system:

- 1 = No improvement or unacceptable impact
- 2 = Marginal improvement or high impact
- 3 = Acceptable improvement or moderate impact
- 4 = Substantial improvement or low impact

The results of the Intermediate Level 1 Screening recommended the following three alternatives for advancement to Level 2 Screening:

- Alternative 3E: Begin at Lotus Road / State Route (SR) 49 Intersection. Lotus Road to Green Valley Road, Green Valley Road to Missouri Flat Road, Missouri Flat Road to SR 49 (Pleasant Valley Road), SR 49 to El Dorado.
- Alternative 5G: Begin at Lotus Road / SR 49 Intersection. Lotus Road to Gold Hill Road, Gold Hill Road to Cold Springs Road, Cold Springs Road to Pierroz Road, Pierroz Road to Placerville Drive, Placerville Drive to Ray Lawyer Drive, Ray Lawyer Drive to Ray Lawyer Drive Extension, Ray Lawyer Drive Extension to SR 49, SR 49 to Diamond Springs Parkway, Diamond Springs Parkway to Missouri Flat Road, Missouri Flat Road to SR 49 (Pleasant Valley Road), SR 49 to El Dorado.
- Alternative 5H: Begin at Lotus Road / SR 49 Intersection. Lotus Road to Gold Hill Road, Gold Hill Road to Cold Springs Road, Cold Springs Road to Pierroz Road, Pierroz Road to Placerville Drive, Placerville Drive to Ray Lawyer Drive, Ray Lawyer Drive to US 50 (Ray Lawyer Drive Interchange), US 50 to Missouri Flat Road (Missouri Flat Interchange), Missouri Flat Road to SR 49 (Pleasant Valley Road), SR 49 to El Dorado.

Alternatives 3E, 5G, and 5H were then evaluated in the Level 2 Screening based on the following criterion and points:

Criteria:

- Transportation Benefits
- Responsiveness to Environmental Goals

Scoring:

- 1 = No improvement or unacceptable impact
- 2 = Marginal improvement or high impact
- 3 = Acceptable improvement or moderate impact
- 4 = Substantial improvement or low impact

The Level 2 Screening resulted in the following ranking of the three alternatives:

- Rank #1 – Alternative 5H
- Rank #2 – Alternative 3E
- Rank #3 – Alternative 5G

The results of the Level 1, Intermediate Level 1, and Level 2 Screening processes were presented to the public at Open House #2 on October 14, 2009. The purpose of the Open House was to provide an overview the study process and present key highlights from the State Route 49 Realignment Study, including the project's history, schedule, and alternatives currently being discussed. Attendees had the opportunity to discuss the project with Project Team members from Caltrans, the El Dorado County Department of Transportation, El Dorado Transit, the EDCTC, and project consultant T.Y. Lin International.

EDCTC staff and Keith Rhodes, Project Manager with T.Y. Lin International, will present an overview of the study and the results of the Level 1, Intermediate Level 1, and Level 2 Screening processes to the Commission today.

Based on comments received during the six SAC meetings, at the October 14 Open House, and during today's presentation to your Commission, the Draft State Route 49 Realignment Study will be prepared and presented to your Commission in February 2010.

Approved for Agenda:

Kathryn F. Mathews, AICP
Executive Director