



## ***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** Board of Directors

**DATE:** February 8, 2012

**FROM:** Celia McAdam, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR POLICY

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

None. For information only.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Placer Parkway is a high priority regional transportation project for the six-county Sacramento region. The approximate 15-mile freeway will connect State Route (SR) 99 in south Sutter County at Sankey Road to SR 65 in Placer County/Rocklin at Whitney Ranch Parkway. It will reduce anticipated congestion on both the local and regional transportation system as well as advance economic development goals in accordance with local jurisdictions' land use plans.

The South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) is the lead agency for the Placer Parkway. On December 3, 2009, the SPRTA Board certified the Final Tier 1 Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and selected a 500'- to 1,000'-wide Preferred Alternative Corridor (Alternative #5) with five interchanges. This action culminated a 7 ½-year process to comply with federal/state environmental requirements. This work involved extensive coordination with federal/state agencies, local jurisdictions, property owners and other interested individuals and organizations. On May 4, 2010, the Federal Highway Administration completed the federal portion of the environmental work and selected the Preferred Alternative via a Record of Decision.

Later project-level (or Tier 2) analyses for segments are to evaluate the freeway's specific footprint within the corridor. On October 28, 2009, the SPRTA Board designated Placer County as the lead for Tier 2/Project-level environmental and design work.

### **DISCUSSION**

Two of the most discussed issues from the Tier 1 work involved:

- Limited access to the future Parkway within a 7-mile segment between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddymont Road.
- Determining the ultimate width of the corridor.

Restricting access to the Parkway will preserve it as a high-speed facility and will limit opportunities for growth inducement related to new interchanges in this segment. Creating a corridor wider than needed for the future freeway will promote a 'parkway' concept with visual open space and encourage linkages to adjacent open space (agricultural and biological resource) areas.

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The Tier 1 document cites that the final size and shape of the corridor may be considered for project-level proposals on a case-by-case basis in agriculturally-designated areas undergoing urban development based on (yet to-be-determined) performance standards. The corridor width would depend upon identifying land use needs of the future approved development, restricting Parkway access (for the 7-mile segment), and complying with agreements made via the modified NEPA/404 process.

As documented above, there has been a significant amount of time and money already invested by SPRTA and its member agencies, as well as state and Federal agency partners, to develop the environmental document for the Placer Parkway. It is critical to maintain the integrity of these efforts, particularly as the Tier 2, or construction level, environmental document is now underway.

Some jurisdictions are now working on project-level Placer Parkway implementation and/or development proposals, which will be crossed by the future Parkway. SPRTA staff, with the concurrence of the SPRTA TAC, sees a strong benefit to that Board articulating a policy for projects that potentially impact the development of the Placer Parkway.

The recommendation that will be considered by the SPRTA Board at their February meeting is to support jurisdiction efforts on project-level proposals so long as they do not jeopardize Tier 1 approvals and regulatory agency agreements.

Funding any major transportation facility is challenging, so cost containment must be a constant focus. Therefore, the recommended policy also specifies that SPRTA would support development proposals so long as they do not result in an increase in net costs to the Parkway project.

CM:ss