



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-0217, **Version:** 2

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Community Development Agency, Transportation Division, recommending the Board consider the following actions pertaining to the U.S. 50 / Camino Area Parallel Capacity / Safety Study Project, CIP 71319:

- 1) Approve an amendment to the 2015 Community Development Agency, Capital Improvement Program, increasing funding, advancing delivery, and amending the project title and description;
- 2) Approve and authorize the Community Development Agency, Transportation Division Director, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Caltrans to state the respective intentions of both Caltrans and County of El Dorado related to proposed improvements to U.S. Highway 50 and adjacent County roadways in the Camino area; and
- 3) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign the Cooperative Agreement between Caltrans and County of El Dorado defining the roles, responsibilities, and cost contribution of each agency related to the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase of the project. (Cont. 12/8/15, Item 16)

**FUNDING:** County funding for the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase uses Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Federal Grant Funds (\$162,000 approximately 6%), and Regional Surface Transportation Program Funds (\$18,000 approximately 1%). Caltrans uses State Highway Operations and Protection Program Funds (\$2,500,000, approximately 93%). (Approximately \$162,000 in Federal HSIP Funds will be utilized with this project).

**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

The 2015 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) contains CIP No. 71319 titled U.S. 50 / Camino Area Parallel Capacity / Safety Study Project (Project). Funding is currently projected out from 10 to 20 years. Approval of this item will advance work on this Project into the current fiscal year, revise the title to "U.S. 50 / Camino Safety Project", and modify the Project description to the following: "The goal of the U.S. 50 / Camino Safety Project is to reduce accidents and improve access in the Camino area. A preliminary study completed and approved by Caltrans in 2010 looked at alternatives and recommended limiting at-grade crossing, improving parallel capacity, constructing an under-crossing of U.S. Highway 50 and realigning several local roads. Caltrans is the lead agency on this project and is working on a final Project Study Report and Environmental Document that will lead to design and construction of the improvements. The County is providing oversight and funding for portions of the project."

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will set forth the anticipated roles and respective intention of Caltrans and the County of El Dorado (County) related to the proposed safety Project. Caltrans will be the lead agency in preparing and approving documents and plans, with the County in a support role. Costs will generally be shared proportionally between work within State Right of Way (Caltrans cost) and work outside of the State Right of Way (County cost). Each phase of work, Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED), Design, Right of Way and Construction, will be more formally defined and funding approved in one or more Cooperative Agreements as the Project progresses.

This Cooperative Agreement will formally establish the roles, responsibilities and financial

contributions of both County and Caltrans for the PA&ED phase of the Project, consistent with the MOU.

## **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

The need for safety improvements to the U.S. Highway 50 Camino Corridor is well established and has been identified as a priority by the County, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), and Caltrans. In 2009, the EDCTC and Caltrans completed a Project Study Report - Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) study identifying improvement options. At that time, funding had not been identified, falling beyond the 10 year programming horizon of all involved agencies.

Subsequent to the completion of the PSR-PDS, Caltrans acknowledged the need for improvements to this area and proposes to prioritize State Safety Funds to accelerate the delivery of the Project, potentially beginning construction as soon as 2019. Caltrans has advanced to the next step in the project delivery process by preparing a Project Study Report (PSR) to 90% completion which is a separate, more detailed study than the PSR-PDS completed in 2009. The PSR identifies improvements including an undercrossing of U.S. Highway 50, east of Camino Heights Drive, along with a concrete median barrier separating eastbound and westbound traffic. The PSR includes several alternative configurations and final design of improvements will be determined during the upcoming environmental review and planning phase.

The completed Project is anticipated to result in substantial safety improvements reducing the number and severity of accidents in the area. In addition to safety improvements, the Project will provide a grade separated automobile and non-motorized under-crossing of Highway 50 improving traffic circulation and safety in the area, particularly during the high volume period of Apple Hill Season. The Project alternatives have been modified to avoid impacts to the significant commercial and agricultural businesses in the area and will provide an economic benefit to the region.

Current plans estimate the total Project cost to be approximately \$50.27 million. Caltrans is proposing to fund the improvements within the state right of way (\$47 million) and requests the County fund the portion of the Project outside the state right of way (\$3.27 million). While Caltrans is proposing funding of the Project, they currently have approval for only the advance planning component of the Project. Funding for the remaining components of the Project has yet to be approved. Caltrans has requested the County enter into the proposed MOU to express its support of the Project and improve the likelihood of further funding approval.

The Community Development Agency, Transportation Division (Transportation) and EDCTC have been actively seeking alternate sources to fund the County contribution, including the submission of a Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant application. The County has been notified that the application was successful and the County will be awarded the grant up to \$3.12 million. There are some remaining details to be worked out and the final grant amount may be less. As the grant award may not fully fund the entire County cost, the MOU acknowledges this possibility and is not a formal obligation of funding. Staff will work to formalize the total grant amount and identify additional funds necessary to complete the Project.

The formal commitment of funds by the County will be made by way of several Cooperative Agreements separated by phases. The included Cooperative Agreement is funding the first phase (PA&ED) of the Project. This Cooperative Agreement is a formal obligation of funds to the Project in

the amount of \$160,000 to fund the County's share of Caltrans' staff work. The County does have sufficient funds to implement this first PA&ED phase of work (\$160,000 County share of Project cost and \$20,000 for County staff cost). Future phases of the Project will require one or more additional Cooperative Agreements and will be forthcoming at a later date as the Project moves forward and funding becomes available. Transportation staff will advise the Board of funding status and options at the time the remaining Cooperative Agreements come forward.

During the PA&ED phase of the Project, Caltrans will decide upon a design alternative for the Project. The overall Project cost could change depending upon the alternative selected; however, the \$50.27 million estimate (with the County's share being \$3.27 million) is the highest cost alternative with each other option being slightly less in cost (within 10%).

By participating in this safety Project, the County will leverage the Caltrans State Safety program to deliver the overall Project more than 10 years earlier than otherwise possible with approximately 93% funding to be provided by the State.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

If the Board chooses not to approve the three recommended actions, the following alternative actions may be considered:

- 1) Do not approve all items. Caltrans may choose to move forward with portions of the Project within Caltrans right-of-way and remove elements of the Project within County jurisdiction. Caltrans may also choose to stop work on the Project as well. Additionally, Caltrans does not yet have formal funding approval from the California Transportation Commission beyond the PA&ED component. County participation in the Project is expected to aid Caltrans in their final funding approval and should the County not participate, it may affect Caltrans' ability to obtain further State Safety Funding.
- 2) Approve only the MOU. Should the Board choose only to approve the MOU, Caltrans would either have to fund the full PA&ED Project component, or stop work on the Project. Under this circumstance, the MOU may be of little assistance to Caltrans obtaining further funding approvals.
- 3) Approve only the PA&ED Cooperative Agreement. Should the Board choose only to move forward with the first component, the PA&ED phase of the Project, then Caltrans will move forward and complete this phase of the project; however, the effect on the Caltrans ability to obtain further funding approval is unknown.

### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

County Counsel and Risk Management have approved the agreements.

### **CAO RECOMMENDATION**

Chief Administrative Office recommends moving staff's recommendations.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Approval of the proposed Cooperative Agreement and the amendment to Project will result in \$180,000 in County cost (\$20,000 for County staff, \$160,000 for the County's share of Caltrans staff costs) in the current Fiscal Year 2015/2016, and will be funded by Regional Surface Transportation Program funds. The expense will be accommodated within the current adopted budget for the Transportation CIP, and staff hours will be diverted from other capital projects. Formal adjustments to the capital program budget and schedules will be presented to the Board with the proposed 2016 CIP.

Approval of the MOU will not formally obligate the County to a funding expenditure for the Project. The document does identify preliminary cost estimates of improvements falling within the County's jurisdiction in the approximate amount of \$3.27 million, which are contemplated to be County costs should the Project continue to completion. The MOU acknowledges the County does not currently have these funds programmed; however, the County is actively seeking additional funds to assist in delivering the Project. Future funding sources may include grants or other discretionary Transportation funds.

#### **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

- 1) The Clerk of the Board will obtain the Chair's signature on three (3) originals of the Cooperative Agreement.
- 2) The Clerk of the Board will forward all originals of the agreement to Transportation for further processing.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Infrastructure

#### **CONTACT**

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Community Development Agency