

State Route 1/Calera Parkway Project

Information Update Report

June 2010

Overview

The segment of State Route 1 between Fassler Avenue and Reina Del Mar Avenue has been a traffic congestion point along the coast since the mid-1980s. The original San Mateo County Measure “A” sales tax program, approved by voters in 1988, identified this segment of State Route 1 as a potential project that would be eligible for funding. Since then, the congestion has been studied and evaluated through the Caltrans project development process. This segment was first referred to as “State Route 1 – Fassler to Westport” but is now referred to as “State Route 1/Calera Parkway.”

Preliminary studies were done in the 1990s, culminating in the approval by Caltrans of the City’s 1999 Project Study Report (PSR). The PSR concluded that State Route 1 should be widened from four lanes to six lanes between Fassler Avenue and Reina Del Mar Avenue. Further studies were undertaken in the early 2000s and a Public Scoping Meeting was held in April 2004. Public comments provided at this scoping meeting included questions about whether a project was needed; requests to evaluate other alternatives; concerns about impacts to wetlands, wildlife habitat, and cultural sites; and concerns regarding the perceived growth inducement potential of this project.

Based on these concerns, additional traffic studies, biological studies, and engineering analyses were conducted in the mid 2000s. The work was done to clarify the nature of the traffic problems, further identify the status of endangered species and environmentally sensitive habitat areas, identify the exact limits of wetlands adjacent to State Route 1, and develop and evaluate concepts that avoid or minimize environmental impacts. In addition, the California Coastal Commission staff was consulted to clarify their jurisdiction and concerns for the area.

Traffic Analysis

The additional traffic studies utilized Year 2007 traffic counts and projected traffic volumes to Year 2015 (estimated completion of construction) and Year 2035 (future design year required by Caltrans). They identified the principal bottleneck to be the result of the two signalized intersections at Reina Del Mar Avenue and Fassler Avenue combined with the large influx of commute traffic from Fassler Avenue. Studies of the morning northbound commute traffic on State Route 1 identified that approximately one-third enters from Fassler Avenue, one-third enters between Crespi Drive and Linda Mar Boulevard, and one-third comes from points south of Linda Mar Boulevard.

The four-lane segment between Fassler Avenue and Reina Del Mar Avenue does not allow enough traffic through the signals during each phase to keep up with demand so the traffic slowly backs up during commute hours with each cycle of the signals. As a result, the Year

2007 northbound State Route 1 backup from Fassler Avenue south during the northbound morning commute averaged about one-third of a mile and extended up to one-half mile during the peak hour. This backup or “queue” is projected to extend an average of one mile and as much as 1.7 miles south of Fassler Avenue by Year 2035 without any improvements. The Year 2007 southbound State Route 1 backup from Reina Del Mar Avenue north during the southbound evening commute averaged about one-half mile and extended up to 1.5 miles during the peak hour. This queue is projected to extend an average of 1.3 miles and as much as 2.2 miles north of Reina Del Mar Avenue by Year 2035 without any improvements.

The four-lane highway north of Reina Del Mar Avenue has capacity to handle the existing and projected traffic since there are no further signalized intersections. Similarly, the four-lane and two-lane segments south of Fassler Avenue are sufficient to handle the existing and projected traffic volumes.

A solution to improve traffic flow along the corridor would need to address the bottleneck caused by the two signalized intersections at Fassler Avenue and Reina Del Mar Avenue. Once through these two intersections in the northbound direction, the traffic would continue flowing smoothly on the freeway section north of Reina Del Mar Avenue. Once southbound traffic gets through these two intersections and one-third of the traffic has exited at Fassler Avenue, the remaining traffic would continue moving smoothly south of the project area.

Coastal Habitat

Preliminary environmental studies identified the potential for two endangered species to be present in the project area. They are the California red-legged frog and the San Francisco garter snake. Meetings with the California Coastal Commission (CCC) staff confirmed that they have jurisdictional authority over the project area due to its proximity to the coast and that the California Coastal Act would not allow any impacts to area wetlands by these types of traffic congestion relief projects. The exact limits of area wetlands adjacent to State Route 1 have been identified and delineated in accordance with the CCC criteria.

Concept Evaluations

Based on the updated traffic analysis and the latest environmental information, a variety of concepts were evaluated to see if there was a viable project that could relieve existing and future congestion without adversely impacting coastal wetlands or critical endangered species habitat. The concepts included the following:

- Interconnect the two traffic signals and optimizing signal timing
- Improve signal timing and add a third lane in the northbound direction only
- Widen State Route 1 from four lanes to six lanes for varying distances north and south of Reina Del Mar Avenue intersection
- Widen the entire State Route 1 segment from south of Fassler Avenue to north of Reina Del Mar Avenue from four lanes to six lanes
- Install roundabouts and remove the signals at either or both traffic intersections
- Install a pedestrian overcrossing on State Route 1 at Reina Del Mar Avenue

- Construct a separate frontage road parallel to State Route 1 between the two traffic signals
- Construct a grade-separated interchange at Route 1 and Reina Del Mar Avenue
- Increase or modify transit service
- Providing school bus service to Vallemer school

Based on a balancing of traffic benefits, environmental impacts, right of way impacts and cost, the most viable solution to address traffic congestion is to widen State Route 1 from four lanes to six lanes from south of Fassler Avenue to north of Reina Del Mar Avenue.

Environmental Review Process

In the late 2000s, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) began consulting with Caltrans to undergo the next phase of the project development process, the Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase. Under this phase, technical studies on all aspects of the project were developed including:

- Traffic analysis
- Cultural, archaeological, historical, biological, and natural environment resources
- Air and noise pollution
- Right of way impacts
- Hydraulics, storm water, and water quality
- Geotechnical conditions and hazardous materials
- Further engineering analysis of potential alternatives

Supporting activities included further consultation with various regulatory and permitting agencies.

As part of the environmental process, a public environmental scoping meeting is held to solicit input from the community on environmental issues of concern that should be considered in the preparation of the proposed project's environmental document. Although a public environmental scoping meeting had already been held in 2004, the City of Pacifica, SMCTA, and Caltrans felt it was appropriate to hold a second public scoping meeting since so much time had passed. On March 3, 2010, a second public environmental scoping meeting was held. In response to public comments and questions raised at that meeting, a public information meeting has been scheduled for June 22, 2010, to present more of the background information regarding what has been studied during the period between the two scoping meetings.

This public information meeting will provide the community an opportunity to learn more about the project investigations that have already been undertaken and to ask questions and provide additional comments to the project development team.

Once all the environmental and engineering technical studies are completed, the findings will be summarized in a draft Environmental Document that will be published for formal public and agency review and comment in accordance with the California Environmental Quality

Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). After a period of circulation and comment on the draft environmental document, all comments will be addressed and a final environmental document and project report will be issued for approval by regulatory agencies and Caltrans.

Schedule

The estimated schedule for completing the environmental process is as follows:

Hold Public Informational Meeting	June 22, 2010
Complete Draft Environmental Document (ED)	December 2010
Public Circulation of Draft ED	January 2011
Hold Public Hearing on Draft ED	February 2011
Complete Final ED	September 2011
Approve Environmental Document	October 2011