

Citizens Advisory Committee: YOLO TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

350 Industrial Way, Woodland, CA 95776---- (530) 661-0816

Topic: Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project Update	Agenda Item#: Agenda Type:	5 Informational	
		Attachments:	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Prepared By: Brian Abbanat		Meeting Date: November 7, 2023	

Staff Note: YoloTD staff are aware of recent media reports regarding the demotion of Caltrans Headquarters Director of Planning over alleged concerns raised about the pavement rehabilitation project currently under construction on the Yolo Causeway as well as the I-80 Managed Lanes project.

YoloTD is not, and has never been, involved in the pavement rehabilitation project currently under construction on the Yolo Causeway. YoloTD is the recipient of federal funds for the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project to add a lane in each direction to the Yolo Causeway to improve mobility in this corridor and doing so in an environmentally responsible way. YoloTD does not control the planning, environmental review, design, or construction for the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project – Caltrans does. While the issues raised in the article are internal to Caltrans, they are troubling and should be addressed by Caltrans.

Consistent with our role in the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project, staff continues to coordinate with Caltrans District 3 to advance the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project in accordance with YoloTD’s Board-adopted goals.

RECOMMENDATION:

Informational. This staff report reflects an update on significant Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project activities.

BACKGROUND:

The most recent Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project update to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) occurred at the January 2023 meeting. At that meeting, staff shared the project history to date and laid out the project’s forthcoming Tolling Advance Planning process. While CAC members are referred to the January 2023 staff report for project history included therein, the December 2021 Board-adopted Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Goals are provided below:

1. Support achievement of state and regional climate goals by limiting VMT increases and maximizing VMT reduction strategies.
2. Increase transit ridership and mode share.
3. Increase safety and ease of bicycle travel on the existing Causeway bicycle path, including connecting routes in West Sacramento and Davis.
4. Advance transportation equity by minimizing project burdens and maximizing project benefits for low-income communities.
5. Improve peak hour travel time on I-80 while reducing the use of local streets and roads for regional trips.
6. Increased coordination with Solano County, Caltrans D4, and MTC on interregional trips.
7. Improve traffic flow by utilizing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies such as ramp metering.
8. Establish a highway management system that can be replicated and integrated regionwide.

Key Activities since January 2023 CAC Meeting

The Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project Tolling Advance Planning process did not unfold as expected for a variety of reasons. As a result, the Caltrans District 3 (D3) and YoloTD project team are adjusting to continuously changing project dynamics.

\$102 Million TCEP Application Not Selected for Funding

In January 2023, an operating assumption was the \$102 million D3 Trade Corridors Enhancement Program (TCEP) grant application submitted in December 2022 would be awarded funding. This would have largely filled the project's funding gap and enabled a tolled managed lane (express lane) project to move forward according to schedule and to obligate the awarded \$86 million federal Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects (INFRA) funds by the Congressionally mandated October 2024 deadline. In June, the project team learned the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project was not selected for TCEP funding, which required additional time and coordination through summer 2023 to determine if an initial project phase could be delivered consistent with the INFRA funding project goals. Subsequently, meaningful conversations have occurred at high state government levels to identify funding to enable a Phase 1 project to be delivered as an express lane, a project alternative most consistent with YoloTD Board-adopted project goals. In this scenario, YoloTD-led tolling advance planning work must proceed at an accelerated rate.

Draft Environmental Impact Report Release Delays

The project's DED (EIR) is among the first in the region to address emerging California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations on freeway expansion projects, specifically Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) impacts. The original target release date of June 30, 2023 was delayed as Caltrans Headquarters and D3 needed additional time to coordinate on the EIR prior to its release. To YoloTD's understanding, these issues are resolved, and it now sits at the Governor's office and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) – the state agency which oversees the state's transportation entities - for final review. No new release date has been provided to us.

DED Release Impact on Schedule

While the funding outlook is improving at the state level, D3 and YoloTD have established Phase 1 project contingency plans depending on the environmental process outcome. This is possible given many baseline project features are common to all EIR alternatives. However, each day of EIR delay compresses the schedule to prepare a Phase 1 Build Option, making it increasingly difficult to obligate the \$86 million INFRA funding by September 2023.

Tolling Advance Planning

Project design and tolling advance planning must be completed by late spring 2024, approximately 6-8 months for activities more commonly requiring up to 18 months, including, potentially:

Tolling Advance Planning (YoloTD)

- Concept of Operations
- Revised Traffic & Revenue Study
- Establishment of Interagency Tolling Authority
- Revenue Expenditure Plan
- Application to California Transportation Commission for Tolling Authority

Capital Project (Caltrans)

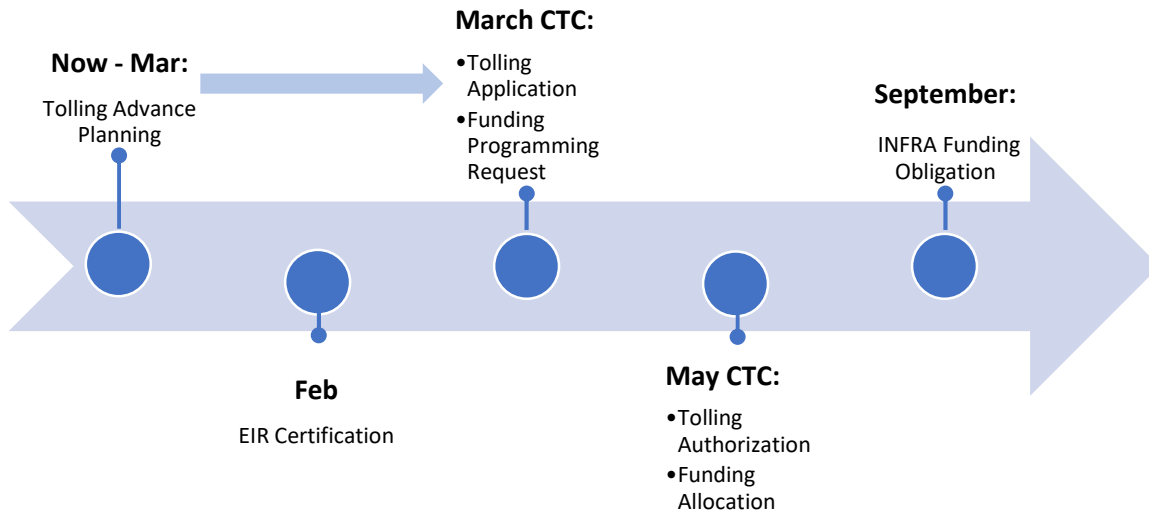
- Complete environmental review
- Complete 100% design & engineering
- Secure additional funding
- List project for construction bids

The Tolling Advance Planning process did not launch on the timeline expected in January 2023 due to the above events. However, staff and consultants WSP engaged relevant regional transportation agencies in a series of working group discussions to lay the foundation for establishing a regional tolling authority. Those conversations – which are ongoing - have been productive. Their staff are aware of the changing Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project landscape and its potential effect on a regional tolling authority’s initial composition, including representation.

In June 2023, YoloTD was awarded \$2 million in SACOG Regional Funding for the Tolling Advance Planning activities, above. Staff have obligated this funding and received a Notice to Proceed from Caltrans Local Assistance. Thus, Tolling Advance Planning activities costs can be reimbursed with this funding. However, the work products that must be completed within the remaining time available is substantial. Staff and consultants have begun Tolling Advance Planning activities and, following a late summer pause, re-engaged the Regional Working Group for tolling policy to update them on the project status and potential paths forward.

Project Schedule

An aggressive, but potentially achievable schedule below illustrates how a Phase 1 express lanes project could unfold:



Circumstances surrounding the Yolo 80 Managed Lanes project continue to evolve each month. Staff will continue to keep the YoloTD Board and CAC apprised of its progress.