



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel
metro.net

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE 
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: CAROL INGE 
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: POST 1989 RETROFIT SOUNDWALL PROGRAM ONGOING
IMPLEMENTATION

ISSUE

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) adopted Soundwall Policy and current State law (Streets and Highway Code 215.6) states that if a local agency provides 33 percent of the soundwall's total cost, its soundwall project may move to the top of the priority list of the unfunded soundwall projects. This memo defines where on the priority list a project will be placed if a local jurisdiction provides 33 percent funding. Staff interprets "unfunded soundwall projects" to be those for which the Board has not programmed funds for final design. If a local jurisdiction provides 33 percent of the soundwall's total cost, staff would move it up in priority to just below the last soundwall on the list with final design funds.

BACKGROUND

In January 2000, the Board adopted the Soundwall Implementation Policy. This policy which was revised in April 2000, prioritized the Post 1989 HOV Retrofit Soundwall Projects and established a phased-in strategy for the program's delivery. The policy also allows local agencies to accelerate soundwall design and construction under certain criteria. This report clarifies the "top of the priority list" placement for those projects for which local agencies commit 33 percent funding. For purposes of this memo, unfunded projects are those for which the Board has taken no action to program funds for final design.

Soundwall Program Status

The Post 1989 Retrofit Soundwall Program adopted policy phases and prioritized projects for delivery. The delivery plan grouped the list of soundwall projects into two Phases. Phase I was divided into priorities which initially packaged projects into ten groups to facilitate the overall delivery process. Subsequently, in September 2007, the Board cancelled Package 9 due to a majority of the soundwalls being constructed through other efforts. Phase II contains soundwall projects identified after the creation of the state-funded 1989 Retrofit Soundwall List. An area qualifies for the bottom of the Phase II list after a determination by Caltrans that the minimum criteria have been met.

LACMTA has systematically funded the design and construction of the nine packages contained in the Phase I, Priority 1 list. Packages 1 through 7 have been funded through construction and Packages 8 and 10 were funded for design and right of way support. Work is either completed, in process or about to start on those soundwalls.

The 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan reserved funding for soundwalls to 2030 for Phase I. Phase II has not been prioritized and projects have yet to be packaged. LACMTA currently has programmed funding for soundwalls through 2012, after which additional funding must be programmed.

Local Agency 33 Percent Contribution

At the request of area residents, Caltrans continues to test areas for soundwall eligibility. Projects continue to be placed at the bottom of the Phase II list, which has not been prioritized and packaged.

Given the magnitude of the Post 1989 Soundwall Projects (over \$2 billion), projects in Phase II may not be scheduled for design or construction until after 2030 at the earliest. In recognition of the length of time it may take to build the soundwalls, the current Soundwall Implementation Policy provides for local agencies to accelerate projects from the bottom of the Phase II list to the top of the unfunded Phase I list, if they advance 33 percent local funds for soundwall design and construction. Staff considered the alternative that 33 percent locally funded projects could be placed ahead of projects funded for design, but not construction. However, prior Board commitments exist for these latter projects. Additionally, it would not be prudent to put ready for construction projects on hold to design a new project. Currently, no local agencies have taken advantage of the 33 percent advancement opportunity.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will evaluate any requests from local agencies requesting to accelerate the construction of their soundwalls by providing local dollars. The Board will be informed of any such requests.