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JANUARY 16, 2009

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: CAROLYN FLOWERS
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

SUBJECT: BIG RIG SERVICE PATROL

ISSUE

In July 2008, the Board authorized the transition of the I-710 Big Rig Demonstration Project to an on-going operation and the expansion of the Big Rig service onto SR-91 between I-710 and the Orange County Line. At this meeting, staff was directed to provide an update on the Big Rig program in six months.

BACKGROUND

I-710 Big Rig Program Status

The I-710 Big Rig service has been in operation since October 2005. The 710 freeway has the highest volume of large truck traffic in Los Angeles County with approximately 26,000 five-plus axle big rig trucks traveling on it each day. In addition to the five axle trucks, there are approximately 13,000 additional two-plus axle trucks and large vans that travel the I-710 corridor each day for a total of almost 39,000 large vehicles. The Big Rig service is comprised of two heavy duty big rig tow trucks that patrol I-710 between Pacific Coast Highway on the south end and 3rd Street in East Los Angeles on the north end. The service operates weekdays (Monday – Friday) from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The goal of the Big Rig program is to provide for the rapid removal of all disabled heavy-duty vehicles (Gross Vehicle Weight Rate between 6,000 to 80,000 pounds or more) that are disabled in a lane or along the shoulder of I-710. Similar to the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program, the Big Rig program provides free services to disabled heavy-duty vehicles. These services include:

- Assist with minor repairs;
- Temporary repairs to minor water and fuel leaks;

- Assist with brakes;
- Provide up to 5 gallons of fuel and 10 gallons of water; and
- Tow the vehicle off the freeway to a safe location.

The program currently provides an average of 350 assists per month and has provided over 9,500 assists since inception.

SR-91

In December 2007, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) approved \$1.5 million in funding for us to expand the Big Rig program to SR-91 Freeway. The SR-91 corridor was selected as the next Big Rig Service Patrol beat due to the high volume of heavy duty vehicles that use it and the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) willingness to implement a concurrent Big Rig Service Patrol on SR-91 within Orange County. The SCAQMD, through its Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee, expressed a desire to fund a multi-county Big Rig project. We will utilize the funding over three years to provide assistance to disabled heavy duty vehicles on SR-91 between I-710 and the L.A./Orange County line. OCTA is planning to implement a similar Big Rig service on SR-91 from the Los Angeles County line to the Riverside County line.

Big Rig Evaluation

I-710 Demonstration Evaluation

DKS Associates was retained to conduct a mid-and post-evaluation of the I-710 Demonstration Project. The evaluation examined the overall project to determine its cost effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement. The evaluation verified that the I-710 demonstration project exceeded the pre-evaluation benefit-to-cost ratio estimate of 4.9:1 with a current benefit-to-cost ratio of greater than 6:1. In addition to the effectiveness of the service, the evaluation presented a list of recommendations for operational improvements. Some recommendations have greater impacts to the program as detailed in Attachment I and others are minor such as updating the list of required tools and the number of gallons of fuel to provide. Staff is currently working with DKS to finalize the evaluation and will then develop a procurement package that incorporates the approved recommendations.

SR-91 Big Rig Service Pre-Operation Evaluation

In conjunction with the I-710 evaluation, DKS conducted a pre-operation evaluation on the proposed SR-91 Big Rig service. The intent of this evaluation was to develop an estimate of the benefit-to-cost ratio based on available data which would be compared to the mid-and post-project results. DKS has estimated the benefit-to-cost ratio for the SR-91 service at 7:1. Staff is currently working on a comprehensive procurement package to obtain a contractor(s) to operate the Big Rig services on both the 710 and 91 freeways. In addition, staff is working with OCTA to coordinate the deployment of the service on the 91 freeway.

Contract Implementation

Staff initially estimated the two Big Rig contracts would begin providing service in July 2009. However, after discussions between DKS and the current I-710 Big Rig contractor, it became evident that an inspection and evaluation of the two heavy duty tow trucks we provided was warranted. As a result of the inspection of the tow trucks, vehicle specifications were prepared to replace the heavy duty tow vehicles we provided in the next contract procurement. The inspection of the tow trucks and subsequent development of vehicle specifications resulted in a delay in the completion of the final Big Rig evaluation. This delay has affected the procurement schedule of the new contracts for both the I-710 and SR-91 services and staff now projects to have contracts in place to begin service on both the I-710 and SR-91 freeways during the second quarter of FY2010.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is moving forward to prepare the procurement documents for both the I-710 and SR-91 Big Rig projects. The contracts are anticipated to begin in second quarter FY2010.

ATTACHMENT

1. I-710 Evaluation Recommendations

ATTACHMENT I

Significant Changes

The evaluation provided the following recommendations that may have a significant impact on the operation of Big Rig service:

- Modify the current configuration of vehicles from two roving heavy-duty tow trucks to one roving heavy-duty tow truck and one roving heavy duty utility truck. The heavy-duty utility vehicle will provide the same services as the big rig tow truck with the exception of being able to tow. The change from two tow trucks to a tow truck and utility truck should improve cost effectiveness without reducing the quality of service since the data reveals that only 1.9% of the 2007 assists required a tow.
- The two primary tow trucks currently providing service on I-710 are our own Bus tow trucks consigned to the service provider as part of their contract. As part of the evaluation, a comprehensive inspection was conducted on the two consigned Metro tow trucks. After reviewing the results of the vehicle inspection, it was determined that these two trucks will no longer be utilized in the Big Rig Program. The two tow trucks were originally designed and manufactured to tow buses, then slightly modified to tow tractor truck and trailer. It was determined that tow trucks specifically built to tow tractor truck and trailer and other commercial type vehicles should be utilized for the program. Staff recommend that the two heavy duty tow trucks are returned to us at the end of the current contract period and the vendor/s awarded the upcoming I-710 & SR-91 Big Rig contracts provide the vehicles as required within the contract specifications. The vehicle specifications developed for the upcoming procurement take into consideration the average useful life of a big rig type vehicle. Industry experts state that these types of vehicles are built and are capable of operating (with regular maintenance) up to one million miles with no significant mechanical problems. Therefore, the vehicle requirement for the heavy duty tow trucks in both the I-710 and the SR-91 contracts will allow the contractor to utilize vehicles less than five years old and with less than 500,000 miles as of the contract start date.

Impact

Changing the configuration of the vehicles providing Big Rig service from two heavy duty tow trucks to one heavy duty tow truck and one utility truck should not change the overall user/motorists benefit realized due to the relatively low number of trucks towed and should improve the overall efficiency of the service. The recommendation to have the contractor provide the primary heavy duty vehicle (whether they procure and/or utilize an existing vehicle in their fleet) may increase the hourly rate which will increase the overall cost of the service.