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AD HOC CONGESTION PRICING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

SUBJECT: CONVERTING I-405 HOV LANES TO HOT LANES BETWEEN I-10 AND US 101

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this report on the feasibility of converting the I-405 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes between the I-10 and US 101.

ISSUE

At its June 27, 2013 meeting, the Metro Board directed staff to report back next month with a feasibility study on implementing a congestion pricing toll program for the I-405 HOV lanes between I-10 and US 101 to cover the cost overruns on the I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements project. A feasibility study is typically completed over nine months. As a result, staff can only provide a high level assessment based upon the Sepulveda Pass Corridor Systems Planning Study (December 2012), LA County 2015 HOV to HOT Conversion Feasibility Study (November 2010) and an initial toll revenue forecast. A link to the complete reports is available at: http://www.metro.net/projects/sfv-405/sepulveda-pass-corridor-systems-planning-study-fcr/ and http://media.metro.net/board/Items/2010/11_november/20101117AHCPItem1.pdf.

BACKGROUND

The I-405 Freeway is one of the most heavily traveled urban highways in the nation. A 13-mile stretch of the freeway, from Getty Center Drive to the I-105 (Century Freeway), was recently ranked the third most congested highway segment in the United States. In addition, the I-405/US-101 (Ventura Freeway) and I-405/I-10 (Santa Monica Freeway) interchanges consistently rank among the nation's top five most congested interchanges.

The I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project, which is currently under construction, will address some of these congestion issues. However, due to an absence of other parallel north-south roadways, this nine mile segment between I-10 and US-101 has

significantly higher demand than other segments of the I-405 Freeway and will require further capacity enhancements in coming years. Due to the steep grades in this mountain pass, further widening of the freeway would be extremely difficult and therefore, other non-widening solutions have been evaluated.

At its December 13, 2012 meeting, the Metro Board directed staff to evaluate the suitability of a transit and/or highway facility through the Sepulveda Pass as a public-private partnership (P3) and to proceed with all actions necessary to assist in the preparation of a Pre-Development Agreement with a private entity to develop the project. This activity is currently underway, but a HOT lane alternative is not one of the options under consideration.

DISCUSSION

The key factors for assessing the feasibility of converting a HOV lane to a HOT lane include:

- Constructability (ROW, including Capital Costs)
- Toll Revenue Potential
- Transit Benefits
- Public Perception/Institutional Requirements (Tolling Authority)

A summary of previous Sepulveda Pass and HOV to HOT lane Conversion study findings for each of the factors above is outlined below.

Constructability

The nine mile segment between the US-101 and the I-10 Freeways corresponds to the area of maximum loading where up to 49% of all traffic passing through the Sepulveda Pass enters and exits the freeway. Traffic demand on the I-405 is significantly less north of the US-101 and south of the I-10 Freeways. The Sepulveda Pass Systems Planning study identified potential locations for ExpressLane direct access ramps and/or tunnel portals at the north and south ends of the nine mile segment.

By restriping lanes from 12 to 11 feet, two ExpressLanes in each direction could be constructed with only spot widening of the paved surface area and no widening outside of the Caltrans right-of-way within the Sepulveda Pass. A rough order of magnitude cost to convert the HOV lanes to HOT lanes and construct two direct access connectors (one in the San Fernando Valley and one on the Westside) is estimated to range from $1.1 billion to $1.2 billion ($2012).

Toll Revenue Potential

A finding of the LA County 2015 HOV to HOT Conversion Feasibility Study concluded that the I-405 North of LAX ranked the highest in toll revenue potential. The Sepulveda Pass Systems Planning Study provided an annualized toll revenue forecast ranging from $64.9 million to $95.2 million ($2012) for surface running Express Lanes. An initial toll revenue forecast is currently underway and will be presented at the full Board meeting.

Transit Benefits

Existing bus service in the Sepulveda Pass is very slow due to the high levels of traffic congestion. Average travel times on the Metro Rapid 761 from Van Nuys to Westwood range from 65-74 minutes in the peak periods (9-11 mph). HOT lanes could cut transit travel times nearly in half to 34 to 36 minutes by providing 45-50 mph speeds through the Pass.

An initial concept estimates transit to run from the Metro Orange Line Sepulveda Station to the Metro Expo Line Station. Transit buses would gain access to the facility via the above direct access connectors from local streets in the San Fernando Valley and the Westside.Express buses could travel for all or portions of the full corridor. Options were identified that are forecasted to attract 55,000 daily boardings (2035) for enhanced bus service. Costs for direct access bus connectors from the Metro Orange Line to the I-405 Freeway and from the Metro Expo Line to the I-405 Freeway were estimated to range from $500 to $600 million ($2012).

Public Perception/Institutional Requirements

State tolling authority is required to convert a HOV lane to a HOT lane. Currently, Metro does not have tolling authority for the I-405. Tolling authority can be sought through specific legislation or as a result of a P3 project.

Further, public perception is an important factor in assessing feasibility. Currently, commuters and residents along the corridor are experiencing construction fatigue as a result of the current I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements project. No formal engagement of the public in this corridor has been conducted to assess perception of a HOT lane in the Sepulveda Pass. However, FasTrak penetration for the Metro ExpressLanes includes residents and commuters along the Sepulveda Pass.

ATTACHMENT:

A. Study Area Map

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ATTACHMENT A

SEPULVEDA PASS SYSTEMS PLANNING STUDY AREA