



**DATE:** July 20, 2020

**TO:** Transportation Authority of Marin Citizens' Oversight Committee

**FROM:** Anne Richman, Executive Director  
Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager

**SUBJECT:** Status Update on NB US101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project (Information), Agenda Item No. 6

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

None – Informational Item Only

## **BACKGROUND**

Currently, traffic transitioning from Northbound US101 to Eastbound I-580 has two signed routes. Both routes, the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Bellam Boulevard exits, utilize local streets designed to serve local traffic. TAM worked with its on-call consultant team and developed seven alternative alignments for a permanent connector. After detailed discussions with Caltrans, City of San Rafael, County of Marin, and the City of Larkspur, the list of alternatives was narrowed to three (with some sub-alternatives, for a total of seven options) and more detailed analysis was performed. Costs of the alternatives ranged from \$135 million to \$265 million and they have varying degrees of impacts and right of way needs.

TAM successfully advocated to have the lower-cost connector placed into the voter approved Regional Measure 3 (RM3) to be administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Meanwhile, in November 2018 the Measure AA Transportation Sales Tax was passed by Marin County voters, with 2% of the sales tax to go to the connector project to provide more robust public outreach and accelerate the project. This local commitment has allowed the project to move forward while the RM3 Program has been delayed due to legal action.

The TAM Board awarded a contract to a team led by Kimley Horn Associates at the July 2019 Board meeting for initial Project work. The scope of services included an initial consideration of all the seven original alternatives as well as developing new ones thorough an extensive public outreach process, discussions with various stakeholder groups, creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with stakeholders regarding design selection, coordination with all affected jurisdictions/property owners, visual simulations, and environmental studies. In addition, several Caltrans required documents: Project Study Report, Advance Planning Study, Design Exceptions, and Project Report, are to be completed. The probable California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document will be an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document will be determined based on the environmental studies. Caltrans has agreed to be the NEPA lead agency. A determination was made to “federalize” the project so it can be eligible for federal funds, if they became available during the life of the project. If the project is not initiated using the federal process, it can be very difficult to utilize federal funds later if needed.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

The team from Kimley-Horn has refined prior alternatives with additional details. A robust outreach and management structure was created. At the key of this effort is an Ad-Hoc Committee of various TAM Board members, an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) consisting of leadership from all the involved agencies including the cities of Larkspur and San Rafael, the County of Marin, MTC, Caltrans, and TAM. Technical development and analyses are overseen by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with similar stakeholders. A key component to the existing outreach is a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) made up of individuals from numerous community groups near the Project area. Membership of the SWG exceeds 20 people.

Meetings have occurred since January and every group has met at least once, with the TAC meeting four times. The second SWG meeting is scheduled for late July and will explore the various alternatives in depth.

The TAC has kicked off the work of developing a robust matrix to evaluation the alternatives. The matrix continues to evolve based on feedback from the other groups. It is expected that an initial look at the feasibility of the alternatives will occur this Fall.

According to the current project schedule, the environmental studies will begin in late 2021 with a signed environmental document ready in late 2023. Detailed design will take around two years and the project should be ready to go into construction in 2025 and be open for traffic in 2028.

## **FISCAL CONSIDERATION**

The RM3 funding is only sufficient for the low speed options near the existing ramp at Bellam Boulevard. A final alternative selection of any of the other options will require additional funding to be secured for the project, possibly impacting the overall schedule.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Initial alternative evaluation will be completed in the Fall. At that point, the ESC and the AD-Hoc Committees will determine if it is feasible to eliminate any of the current alternatives.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None