



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** PCTPA Board of Directors **DATE:** March 12, 2014

**FROM:** Celia McAdam, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** TEMPORARY TERMINATION OF I-80 EASTBOUND CARPOOL LANE IN SOUTH PLACER COUNTY

### ACTION REQUESTED

None. For information only.

### BACKGROUND

In response to the growing traffic congestion in the area, the I-80 Bottleneck project added auxiliary and carpool lanes that were constructed from the Sacramento/Placer County line to 0.9 miles east of State Route 65. The project, completed in three phases and opened in 2011, carried an initial estimate cost of \$210 million; ultimately, the project was completed for \$89 million.

With completion of the I-80 Bottleneck project, the next step is improvements to the I-80/SR 65 interchange, which PCTPA is currently working towards environmental approval. However, the interchange will likely be constructed in phases over many years given the existing lack of funding.

### DISCUSSION

Backups at the I-80/SR 65 Interchange, combined with the traffic movements at the Eureka Road and Taylor Road interchanges, result in a concentration of weaving movements that create further traffic problems on eastbound I-80. As a way to address the situation while we work on the I-80/SR 65 Interchange Improvements, the Board requested that staff investigate the possibility of temporarily terminating the eastbound I-80 carpool lane at Eureka Road, which currently extends 0.9 miles past State Route 65. PCTPA staff submitted a letter to Caltrans on January 30, 2014, shown in Attachment 1.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), along with assistance from traffic consultants Fehr & Peers, performed an analysis of temporarily terminating the existing I-80 eastbound carpool lane. Caltrans stated the results showed little difference in traffic congestion and FHWA expressed several reasons to not temporality terminate the existing carpool lane, including the resulting reduction in carpool lane capacity. Caltrans provided a letter to PCTPA on February 26, 2014, shown in Attachment 2.

Technical staff at PCTPA and several member jurisdictions were surprised by the findings. PCTPA staff is following up on the analysis, potentially assisting with the development of additional technical data, to ensure that Caltrans and FHWA have available the best and most complete information on which to make this determination.

**Attachment 1**



PLACER COUNTY  
TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNING AGENCY

- KATHY LESBETH  
City of Auburn
- TONY HESCH  
City of Colfax
- STAN NADER  
City of Lincoln
- SANDRA CALVERT  
Town of Loomis
- DIANA RUSLIN  
City of Rocklin
- SUSAN ROHAN  
City of Roseville
- JIM HOLMES  
Placer County
- KIRK UHLER  
Placer County
- RON TREABESS  
Citizen Representative
- CELIA McADAM  
Executive Director

January 30, 2014

Ms. Jody Jones  
District Director, District 3  
California Department of Transportation  
703 B Street  
Marysville, CA 95901

Dear Ms.  Jones:

We appreciate the ongoing partnership between PCTPA and Caltrans District 3 that continues to produce numerous and significant improvements to our state highway system. I am writing in reference to one of those projects, the I-80/SR 65 Interchange Improvements.

As you know, this is a significant undertaking to reconstruct this interchange to improve safety, reduce congestion, and allow travel between the two routes at normal speeds. Because of the estimated \$300 million cost, it is likely that the project will be constructed in phases over many years. One of the key issues we are dealing with is that Eureka Road, Taylor Road, and the I-80/SR 65 Interchanges are very close together, and there is a tremendous amount of weaving movements in this segment that impact safety. At the same time, congestion at the I-80/SR 65 Interchange makes those weaving movements even more difficult. As the right lanes of I-80 become backed up, weaving movements are shortened, and pushed to all the mixed flow lanes. In addition, some drivers try to jump ahead of the backup line, and often stop up adjacent lanes as they try to merge into the slow moving traffic.

This issue was the subject of discussion by the PCTPA Board at their January meeting. One promising idea to improve the situation while we work on the I-80/SR 65 improvements was allowing through traffic to move all the way to the left into the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane to avoid these local merge movements. Therefore, at the request of the Board, we would like Caltrans District 3 explore the idea of terminating the I-80 eastbound HOV lane at Eureka Road from an operational and safety standpoint. It is our intent that this would be a temporary change, and the original terminus east of SR 65 be restored once I-80/SR 65 Interchange Improvements are implemented.

Thank you for the ongoing partnership, and consideration of our request. If you should have any questions or would like more detail, please contact me or Project Manager Luke McNeel-Caird at 530.823.4030.

Sincerely,

  
Celia McAdam, AICP  
Executive Director

cc: Rick Land, Chief Deputy Director, Caltrans

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DISTRICT 3  
703 B STREET  
MARYSVILLE, CA 95901  
PHONE (530) 741-4232  
FAX (530) 741-4245  
TTY 711

Agenda Item J  
*Attachment 2*



*Flex your power!  
Be energy efficient!*

February 26, 2014

Ms. Celia McAdam, AICP  
Executive Director  
Placer County Transportation Planning Agency  
299 Nevada Street  
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Ms. McAdam:

Thank you for your January 30, 2014 letter regarding improving traffic operations on eastbound Interstate 80 (I-80) approaching the State Route 65 (SR-65) Interchange. We concur that a bottleneck is formed on eastbound I-80 at this location. As you stated, it is caused by merge/weave turbulence as drivers merge to the right in order to exit onto SR-65.

A traffic study was performed to evaluate traffic operation advantages to opening the eastbound HOV lane to all traffic starting at the Eureka Road off-ramp. During the analysis, we consulted traffic consultant Fehr and Peers for a microsimulation traffic analyses of this segment, as well as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The traffic model did not show a traffic operational advantage to opening the eastbound HOV lane to all traffic. Speed contour maps were developed for both scenarios. They showed little difference in overall speeds between existing conditions and the HOV lane proposal. This means that eastbound throughput, as well as eastbound to northbound throughput, was unaffected by conversion of the HOV lane to a mixed flow lane.

The reason is believed to be that in both scenarios, the first two inside lanes flow relatively free for most of the afternoon peak period, although there is a short time frame during the peak hour where speeds are reduced significantly.

As I mentioned earlier, FHWA was consulted and their response was negative to temporarily terminating the existing HOV lane at Eureka Road. They cited several reasons including the

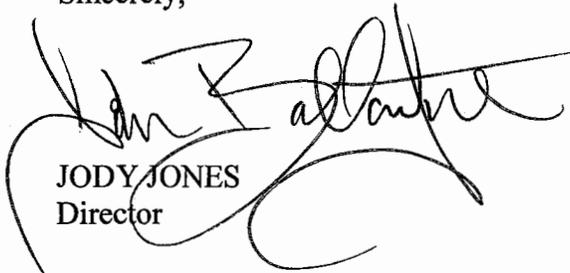
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temporary elimination of HOV lane capacity, the impact on air quality in the valley and the new state and federal focus on greenhouse gases.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Jim Calkins, Chief of Freeway Operations, at (916) 859-7940.

Sincerely,



JODY JONES  
Director

c: Richard Land