

*"Placerville, a Unique Historical Past Forging into a Golden Future"*



**City Manager's Report**  
**February 10, 2015 City Council Meeting**  
**Prepared by: Rebecca Neves, City Engineer**

**Item #:** 15.1

**Subject:** Western Placerville Interchanges – Project Status Update

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**Background:**

A Project Study Report (PSR) was developed for this project by the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) and approved by Caltrans on June 1, 2001. The Draft Project Report (DPR), developed for this project by the City of Placerville, was approved by Caltrans on September 9, 2005. The DPR discussed four viable project alternatives, giving each equal weight, and were used as an alternatives comparison tool and supporting document for the Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA). As part of previous studies, three public meetings were held during the preparation of the DPR to acquire feedback for the various design alternatives. The meetings were held on January 7, 2004, June 29, 2005, and October 21, 2005. No significant changes were made to the project alternatives as a result of the DPR circulation and public comment. In November of 2005, the City of Placerville adopted the CEQA Environmental Impact Report and selected Alternative D, the Placerville Drive Roundabout and Ray Lawyer Drive Loop Ramp Alternative, as the project configuration for the Western Placerville Interchanges project.

In May of 2006, FHWA<sup>1</sup> adopted a NEPA<sup>2</sup> Finding of No Significant Impact, followed by Caltrans' approval in January 2008 of Alternative D as the preferred alternative. Caltrans' approval included a requirement that a detailed analysis, called a Concept Approval Report (CAR), be completed and approved for the Roundabout. That approval further stipulated that should the CAR not be approved, the preferred alternative would revert to Alternative B-the Placerville Drive Signalized Intersections and Ray Lawyer Drive Loop Ramp Alternative.

On January 15, 2008 Caltrans approved the Project Report (PR), which identified the preferred alternative, discussed why the three other viable alternatives were not chosen; described changes made as a result of public comment, and discussed mitigating features outlined in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

As a result of the approved CAR, it was identified that the signalized intersection of Forni Road and Lo Hi Way would be revised to a roundabout based on an updated traffic analysis prepared for this project. The traffic analysis shows that a roundabout controlled intersection at the intersection of Forni Road and Lo Hi Way would provide better traffic control due to the reduction in turn conflicts, improved traffic operations, and improved air quality. Part of the identified improvements to

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Highway Administration

<sup>2</sup> National Environmental Policy Act

operations are because roundabouts function better as a pair and the project already includes a roundabout at the intersection of Placerville Drive, Fair Lane, and the US 50 on- and off-ramps. Roundabouts also incur reduced ongoing maintenance costs compared with signalized intersections. On June 24, 2014, Council certified the Supplemental EIR in accordance with CEQA, adopted the Findings of Fact for the WPI Project, and approved the Modified Alternative D as the City's preferred project design. The design consultant, Dokken Engineering, has prepared and submitted to Caltrans the Supplemental Project Report identifying Modified Alternative D as the selected project design.

### **Phasing Progress Update**

As it may be recalled, the PR identified the use of project phasing as a way to accommodate near-term traffic congestion and safety issues within the project limits. Since the approval of the PR in 2008, the Superior Court of El Dorado County has proposed the relocation of the Placerville Courthouse to a site adjacent to the County Jail and Forni Road. Given the courthouse project size and location, the transportation operations of the Forni Road/Placerville Drive interchange was analyzed to account for the increase in traffic. The relocation of the courthouse adjacent to the WPI project, together with recognition of funding availability and limitations, prompted the reassessment of phasing of the project. As a result, phasing of the project has been revised as summarized below (please see attachment 1):

#### Phase 1A consisted of:

- Construction of the westbound on-ramp from Ray Lawyer Drive
- Construction of the westbound auxiliary from the Ray Lawyer Drive on-ramp terminus to the existing Placerville Drive off-ramp
- Construction and partial realignment of roadway improvements along Fair Lane

Phase 1A was constructed in 2013, is operational, and was accepted by the City at the regularly scheduled Council meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

#### Phase 1B consists of:

- Construction of roadway improvements along Fair Lane to include constructing a new portion of sidewalk between the County Government Center and the Fairgrounds Shopping Center.

Phase 1B has identified construction funding, the Request for Authorization on the project has been submitted to Caltrans for approval and it is anticipated to go before Council for approval to allow bidding spring 2015 with construction completed in 2015.

#### Phase 2 consists of:

- Construction of the eastbound off-ramp at Ray Lawyer Drive
- Construction of the eastbound auxiliary from the existing Forni Road on-ramp to the eastbound off-ramp at Ray Lawyer Drive.
- Construction of associated improvements to the Forni Road and Ray Lawyer Drive roadways including intersection improvements.
- Construction of a new Park-and-Ride facility between the eastbound off-ramp and Forni Road.

Funding for Phase 2 is programmed and it is anticipated that this project will go to construction Spring of 2016. City Staff is currently working on a cooperative agreement with Caltrans on this phase. In addition, City Staff is also working on a cooperative agreement with EDCTA for the park n' ride component of this phase. It is anticipated that both of these items will come before Council for approval in the upcoming months.

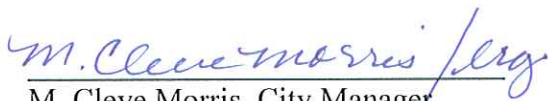
Phase 3 (Modified Alternative D) consists of:

- Construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Fair Lane, Placerville Drive, and existing westbound off-ramp and westbound on-ramp at Placerville Drive
- Widening and improvements to Placerville Drive north of the new roundabout
- Construction and improvements to the westbound on-ramp at Placerville Drive
- Construction and improvements to the eastbound off-ramp at Placerville Drive
- Revised Weber Creek Bike Path Alignment
- Construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Forni Road and Lo Hi Way
- Widening and improvements to Forni Road from Lo Hi Way to Placerville Drive
- Construction of westbound off-ramp and eastbound on-ramp to Ray Lawyer Drive
- Widening and improvements from Ray Lawyer Drive to Fair Lane

This portion of the project is not yet funded; however preliminary design has been authorized and is underway.

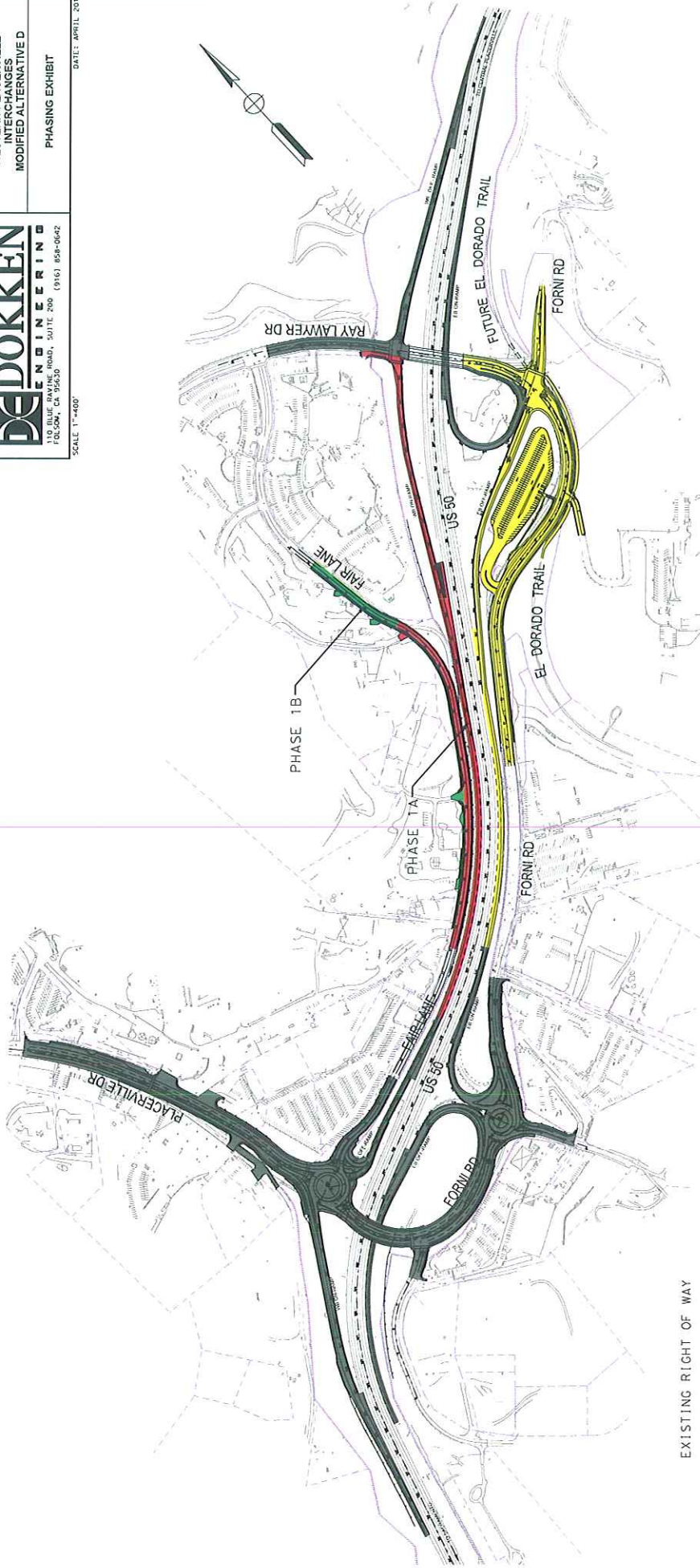
  
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Rebecca Neves, City Engineer

  
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Pierre Rivas, Development Services Director

  
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M. Cleve Morris, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Phasing Exhibit



EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY

WESTERN PLACERVILLE INTERCHANGES: PHASES: 1A, 1B, 2 AND 3

LEGEND	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
[Red Box]	1A	WB US 50 ON RAMP/FAIR LANE IMPROVEMENTS	CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE
[Green Box]	1B	FAIR LANE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS	FINAL DESIGN AUTHORIZED
[Yellow Box]	2	FORNI ROAD, RAY LAWYER DRIVE, EB US 50 OFF-RAMP IMPROVEMENTS	FINAL DESIGN FUNDED
[Dark Grey Box]	3	FORNI ROAD/PLACERVILLE DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS	PRELIMINARY DESIGN AUTHORIZED
[Light Grey Box]	3	EB ON RAMP/WB OFF RAMP AT RAY LAWYER DRIVE	PRELIMINARY DESIGN AUTHORIZED