

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Approved by:

Handwritten signature of Keith Helmuth in blue ink.

Keith Helmuth, Department Director

Handwritten signature of Arnaldo Rodriguez in blue ink.

Arnaldo Rodriguez, City Manager

Council Meeting of: November 6, 2019

Agenda Number: B-4

SUBJECT:

Consideration of a Minute Order authorizing the Mayor to sign a Letter in Opposition of The Deletion of the State Route (SR) 99 Widening Project from Avenue 7 to Avenue 12 from the Draft 2020 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council (Council) approve of a letter in opposition of the removal of the SR 99 - South Madera 6 Lane Widening from Avenue 7 to 12 Project in Madera County from the Draft 2020 ITIP.

SUMMARY:

The Madera County Transportation has made a request of the City because the Draft 2020 ITIP proposes the deletion of three projects; one of which is the SR 99 South Madera 6 Lane Widening Project from the Draft 2020 ITIP due to the negative economic and safety impacts that would continue to be negatively impacted if the SR 99 continues to experience increased congestion.

DISCUSSION:

As the attached letter describes, deletion of the projects that includes the segment of SR 99 between Avenue 7 and Avenue 12 would have a significant negative impact on the region in a multitude of different ways. It would undermine the collaborative efforts that the region, including the City, have made through the years in their attempts to address safety and economic concerns. Those concerns, if left unaddressed, will only get substantially worse as time passes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no identifiable impacts associated with a decision to send this letter.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE VISION MADERA 2025 PLAN:

Strategy 126: This project supports this strategy for providing clean, attractive streets that are safe and aesthetically pleasing.

ALTERNATIVES:

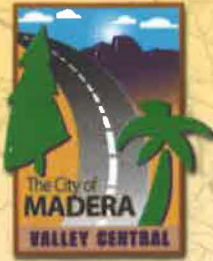
Council may determine that a letter should not be sent. Such a decision to do so could result in the project not being place in the upcoming ITIP.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Letter

Attachment 1

Letter of Opposition



November 6, 2019

Fran Inman, Chair
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Draft 2020 ITIP (Interregional Transportation Improvement Program)

Dear Ms. Inman,

City of Madera would like to express its strong opposition and valid concern regarding the removal of the SR 99 - South Madera 6 Lane Widening (Avenue 7-12) Project in Madera County (APDE) from the Draft 2020 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). The deletion of this safety and congestion relief project undermines the long-range collaborative planning process that has occurred for this vital segment of SR 99. The amount scheduled for deletion is \$9 million for Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E). Environmental review work is currently underway for this project.

This crucial project was already in the environmental phase when it was scheduled for deletion in the 2016 ITIP due to a statewide funding shortfall. The currently under construction SR 99 Avenue 12-17 project was also scheduled for deletion. MCTC worked with Caltrans to keep the SR 99 Avenue 12-17 project in the ITIP and voluntarily removed the SR 99 Avenue 7-12 project on a temporary basis with the assurance that the project would be added back to the 2018 ITIP. Caltrans kept its promise and added the project back to the 2018 ITIP. However, all the previous environmental work that was underway at the time of deletion had to be restarted. The project is now once again being proposed for deletion in the 2020 ITIP with the environmental work underway. Caltrans is no longer fulfilling their promise to advance the project with its scheduled deletion. Also, there are no assurances that the project will be added back to the 2022 ITIP.

Madera has been a long-standing partner with Caltrans on SR 99 projects and has been committed to seeing the completion of all SR 99 projects. However, MCTC only learned of the proposed deletion on the day of the release of the Draft 2020 ITIP. Caltrans did not provide the opportunity for any collaboration or comments prior to the release of the document. The proposal to delete this necessary project is not consistent with long term plans and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program. It appears that the Draft 2020 ITIP was prepared in a top down approach (Governor Executive Order N-19-19) and does not seem to follow Federal planning rules regarding Federal planning

Engineering

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performance measures, safety, and public input. The public has made it very clear that they want SR 99 road improvements with the goal of moving people and perishable agricultural freight more safely and efficiently.

SR 99 serves as the backbone to the State's goods movement system and has higher than average truck percentage volumes. Twenty-five percent of all food in the United States comes from the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley produces several agricultural goods including nuts, lettuce, dairy, fruits, tomatoes, and wine.

Approximately half of California's goods move through the San Joaquin Valley. Freight is moved through the Valley to other places within the state, outside the state, and to global markets through the ports. Trucks carrying agricultural products carrying "just in time" cargo so it must be as efficient as possible when traveling through the region to places throughout the United States and to various ports to export products. Over 500 million tons of commodities are transported through the San Joaquin Valley annually. This amount is projected to increase to 800 million tons by 2040. Over 44 percent of all employment in the San Joaquin Valley is associated with goods movement-dependent industries.

Widening this section of SR 99 will add two lanes to eliminate a current bottleneck. The project will substantially reduce the number, rate, and consequences of surface transportation-related accidents, serious injuries, and fatalities among transportation users. The current level of service will continue to rapidly deteriorate in a no-build scenario. As the current level degrades, there will be a likely increase in collision rates along this segment and associated costs in damage, delays, injuries, and lives. Completing the gaps on SR 99 will help reduce the cost of doing business by making it more efficient and cost-effective to move goods and people.

Caltrans choosing to disinvest in the Madera Region will yield a negative effect towards local, regional, statewide and national goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and curbing tailpipe emissions. The process to defund the project represents an undermining of the extensive planning effort taken to develop the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy which are designed to layout a comprehensive plan to fulfill said goals.

This project not opening as scheduled is estimated to yield immediate effects on SR 99 travel speeds, regional VMT, and Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Greenhouse Gas emissions are projected to rise over three tons per day by 2035.

Furthermore, not delivering this project negatively impacts the ability to demonstrate Federal Air Quality Conformity necessary for not just the Madera region but also seven other San Joaquin Valley counties, to adequately address criteria air pollutants that are regulated through the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

While slower speeds will see some of the negative emissions effects isolated to SR 99 on and in the proximity of this project's extents, it's important to acknowledge VMT increases and their subsequent emissions will be attributed to higher levels of travel on

the local roadway system. Avenue 12 and Avenue 9 in Madera County are east-west corridors in the projects extents that are seeing increasing levels of usage today in lieu of SR 99 or other available state highways for regional traffic. These conditions will be worsened at an accelerated rate at the cost of efficient transport and safety of travelers if the State withdraws project support in the Madera Region.

Appendix A of the Draft 2020 ITIP correctly identifies this project will provide benefits to American with Disabilities Act (ADA) facilities, make improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and provide congestion relief to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Despite the Project Programming Request indicating otherwise, all of these benefits are in fact consistent with goals outlined in the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Madera region.

It is also important to note that the project description for the SR 99 – Madera 6 Lane Widening Project (Avenue 12-17) in the Draft 2020 ITIP is incorrect in stating that “The sections of freeway to the north and south of this segment are existing six lane roadways.” The sections of freeway to the north and south of the project currently under construction (including the project scheduled for deletion) are existing 4 lane roadways.

Sincerely,

Andrew Medellin, Mayor