

# Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: March 5, 2013

Reference No.: 2.1a.(3b)  
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA  
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Rachel Falsetti  
Division Chief  
Transportation Programming

Subject: **STIP AMENDMENT 12S-012B**

## **ACTION UPDATE:**

This item was deferred from Action at the Commission's January 8, 2013 meeting pending receipt of additional information regarding the Alturas Route 299 Improvements project (PPNO 3368). This item has been revised to 1) remove the Route 299/139 Canby Highway Advisory Radio project (PPNO 3382) from this amendment and place under a separate item on this month's agenda - STIP Amendment -12S-012A [Reference No. 2.1a.(3a)]; and, 2) revise the Background section of the amendment to provide additional information as requested by the Commission. Letters stating Modoc County Transportation Commission's position and the Department's response are attached.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The California Department of Transportation (Department) does not recommend the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the requested State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) amendment to delete the Alturas Route 299 Improvements project (PPNO 3368). The amendment was noticed at the December 5-6, 2012 Commission meeting.

## **ISSUE:**

The Modoc County Transportation Commission (MCTC) proposes to amend the 2012 STIP to delete the Alturas Route 299 Improvements project (PPNO 3368) in Modoc County. The Department does not concur with Modoc County's request.

## **BACKGROUND:**

This project is programmed in the 2012 STIP for \$4,296,000 in Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funds, with construction scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2013-14.

MCTC proposes to unprogram all unexpended funds from the project and return \$4,075,000 to Modoc County's regional share balance. MCTC has determined that the project is no longer a priority in the region due to a continued economic downturn, slow population increase and business demise.

### Programming history

- Project programmed in the 1998 STIP for \$120,000 to complete the environmental phase, with an additional \$485,000 programmed in the 2000 STIP for design and right of way work.
- MCTC requested that the project be deleted from the STIP in January 2005, stating that the project cost had increased to a level that outweighed the benefits of the project (\$558,000 was reported as expended for the project).
- MCTC requested that the project be added back into the STIP in May 2008.
- The project is currently programmed in the STIP-RIP for \$4,296,000. The Department has expended an additional \$221,000 for project development activities.

### Need for Project

The original need for the project was first identified by the MCTC in mid 1990's to improve traveler safety and reduce speeds approaching the city. As this segment of two-lane highway enters the City of Alturas, traffic flow can become congested due to the turning movements of vehicles. Business and residential areas exist along this mile long reach where traffic interruptions and queuing occur. Future growth was anticipated, further contributing to congestion and the potential for increased accidents. Shoulder widths vary from 1 foot to 4 feet wide, and mobility of bicycles and pedestrians is a challenge.

A project was initiated and programmed in the 1998 and 2000 STIP to address the need by adding a continuous left turn lane, wider shoulders and drainage improvements. Project development work continued over the years until MCTC alerted the Department that local priorities and project support had changed.

The unmet need remained until MCTC requested that the Commission reprogram the project in the 2008 STIP, with the Environmental phase to begin in 2011. In a collaborative effort, the Department and MCTC developed a project charter that identified the specific needs of the project; including wider shoulders and crosswalks along with flashing beacons to improve pedestrian mobility and safety, speed radar feedback signs for traffic calming, installation of concrete gutters, culverts and paved areas for drainage improvements. The continuous left turn lane was deleted from the project. However, in August 2012, just after the Department completed the environmental phase, MCTC requested the project be terminated for a second time due to changed local priorities and support for the project.

The Department strongly supports the continued development of this project in order to:

- Reduce potential collisions and enhance safety.
- Provide for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Address vehicular speeds which are higher than desired.
- Address congestion and parking issues between Maple and Main.
- Address drainage issues between Juniper and Main.
- Reduce traffic queuing at Thomason Street, West C Street and Juniper Street.
- Address pedestrian crossing issues.
- Improve safety at a bus stop near Thomason Street.
- Improve drainage ditches along the highway to accommodate the city's master drainage plan.

The proposed revisions are shown in the following table:

**DELETE: Alturas Route 299 Improvements Project (PPNO 3368)**

County	District	PPNO	EA	Element	Const. Year	PM Back	PM Ahead	Route/Corridor					
Modoc	2	3368	29971	CO	2013-14	39.3	40.6	299					
Implementing Agency: (by component)	PA&ED	Caltrans					PS&E	Caltrans					
	R/W	Caltrans					CON	Caltrans					
RTPA/CTC:	Modoc County Local Transportation Commission												
Project Title:	Alturas 299 Improvements												
Location	In and near Alturas, from west of Mill Street to east of Route 299/395 separation.												
Description:	Construct paved shoulders, including bike and pedestrian lanes, to improve safety and mobility.												
<b>(DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS)</b>													
FUND	TOTAL	Project Totals by Fiscal Year						Project Totals by Component					
		Prior	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	R/W	CON	PA&ED	PS&E	R/W Supp	CON Supp
<b>RIP</b>													
Existing	4,296	434	266	3,596				20	3,140	206	362	112	456
Change	(4,075)	(434)	(45)	(3,596)				(20)	(3,140)	15	(362)	(112)	(456)
Proposed	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>													
Existing	4,296	434	266	3,596				20	3,140	206	362	112	456
Change	(4,075)	(434)	(45)	(3,596)				(20)	(3,140)	15	(362)	(112)	(456)
Proposed	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**RESOLUTION:**

Be it Resolved, that the California Transportation Commission does hereby amend the State Transportation Improvement Program for the Alturas Route 299 Improvements Project (PPNO 3368) to reflect the changes described above.

Attachments

- Attachment A – Letter from Modoc County
- Attachment B – The Department’s Response
- Exhibit 1 – Project Map



111 W. North Street  
Alturas, CA 96101

(530) 233-6410 Phone  
233-3744 Fax

Meets First Tuesday of  
Even Numbered  
Months  
at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioners

John Dederick  
Chairman  
City of Alturas Mayor

Jim Wills  
Commissioner  
County Supervisor IV

David Allan  
Commissioner  
County Supervisor I

Bill Hall  
Commissioner  
City at Large Citizen

Bobby Ray  
Commissioner  
City Councilmember

Terry Williams  
Commissioner  
County at Large Citizen

Alternate  
County Supervisor

Cheryl Nelson  
Alternate  
City Councilmember

Staff

Debbie Pedersen  
Executive Director

Niki Witherspoon  
Systems Manager

Cindy Imbach  
Transit Manager

January 17, 2013

California Transportation Commission  
1120 N Street  
Room 2221 (MS-52)  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: **Alturas 299 Widening Project**

Dear Commissioners:

The Modoc County Transportation Commission (MCTC) requested that the CTC take action to delete the Alturas 299 Widening STIP Project - PPNO 3368 (project) at the January 8, 2013, CTC meeting. The MCTC presented concerns, substantiating their request, regarding traffic speeds, drainage issues, two government offices relocating from SR 299 into Alturas, and unknown stability of proposed developments along the project. Also, it was noted that this project is neither a capacity increasing project nor a safety project as currently scoped. CTC requested additional information for the March 5, 2013, meeting.

Hazardous waste (from underground fuel tanks) is present at the West C Street intersection and causes a high risk for cost overruns; MCTC previously asked Caltrans for analysis and costs associated with the hazardous waste; Caltrans indicated these were not part of the project scope and all efforts would be made to avoid the hazardous waste during construction. This causes great concern that undetermined cost overruns, inherent with hazardous waste cleanups, could impact our future STIP shares for this 100% RIP funded project. Attached is a table that displays ongoing concerns that have been communicated to Caltrans by the MCTC and project stakeholders; the table includes information showing responses received from Caltrans and the status/outcome of each issue. Also attached is a map of the existing development along the route, including some business general information, traffic volumes and accident data.

Open communications have been ongoing throughout the development of the project. This is a sampling of the meetings wherein Alturas 299 Widening project actions, issues, and concerns were communicated:

- August 2, 2011 – speed limits to remain unchanged
- October 4, 2011– revised scope re: traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, drainage improvement.
- June 5, 2012 – Public workshop – comments concerning traffic speeds, drainage, and crosswalks pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- August 8, 2012 – Project Report not approved
- October 10, 2012 – adopt resolution to unprogram the project
- November 16, 2012 – conducted a workshop with Caltrans Dist 2 management
- December 13, 2012 – Teleconference with CTC staff and Caltrans
- February – currently working with Caltrans to set up a focus meeting with MCTC and District Director and Project Manager.

Please contact Debbie Pedersen, Executive Director, at (530) 233-6410, if you have comments or questions.

Sincerely,

John Dederick  
Chairman, MCTC

**SR 299 Issues and Concerns**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Initiated</b>	<b>MCTC issues communicated to</b>	<b>Caltrans response/outcome</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1	2008-2012	Traffic speeds too high; would like speeds reduced within City limits	Flashing speed feedback signs and crosswalks may reduce traffic speeds; speed limit campaign following project.	Unresolved; speed to likely increase or stay constant with highway widening
2	April 2011	Drainage re: localized ponding and icing along segment; coordinate with City's Master Drainage Plan	CTs indicated MCTC would have opportunity to approve the project and move forward to final design or not. <b>Aug 2012 Project Report</b> - perpetuate existing drainage with sheet flow onto private property.	Unresolved - Wanted storm water to connect to Warner St drainage; MCTC opted to not continue with project
3	April 2011	Potential Hazardous Waste at SR 299 and West C; MCTC requested analysis - Concerns with potential Cost overruns re: Haz Waste	Haz Waste exist at this locations; env studies determine extent w/cost for current scope and foot print. Full haz waste analysis and remediation plan beyond scope of project.	High Risk/unknown costs;
4	April 2011	Consider redesign of the SR 299/West C/Juniper St to realign intersection	Focus meeting to discuss R/W acquisition and estimated costs	Unresolved - meeting did not occur
5	April 2011	Stand alone pedestrian facility along the south alignment parallel to SR 299	Solution was to use TE funding for bicycle lanes; most likely increase speed limit - High concern of MCTC	Partially met request with undesired effects
6	April 2011	Reduce the design at RxR crossing if scope reduced to left turn pockets	If scope is modified; work may be reduced at RxR crossing	Partially resolved; Scope reduced - RxR improvements remain
7	April 2011	Rectify existing drainage issues and not create or exacerbate current drainage issues	Caltrans provide preliminary info on drainage, R/W, traffic accident history, design layouts, and updated costs near NEPA approval (Summer/Fall 2012)	MCTC reviewed Project Report and did not move forward with final design; action to delete project
8	April 2011	Establish regular monthly meetings	Quarterly project team meetings with focus monthly meetings	Unresolved- no meetings occurred
9	April 2011	Develop a project timeline with schedule and deliverables (all phases)	Status document will be provided every other month	Unresolved - Status document not provided
10	April 2011	Present a monthly expenditure report	Recommended a quarterly expenditure report presented at MCTC meeting	Resolved - CT quarterly updates to MCTC
11	April 2011	Continuous Left turn lane not needed	Project reduced in scope to left turn pockets at West C/299 and Juniper/299	Resolved - scope reduced October 2011

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****District 2**

1657 Riverside Drive  
Redding, CA 96001  
PHONE (530) 225-3477  
FAX (530) 225-2459  
TTY 711



*Flex your power!  
Be energy efficient!*

February 7, 2013

California Transportation Commission  
1120 N Street  
Room 2221 (MS-52)  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

This is in response to the January 17, 2013 letter from Modoc County Transportation Commission to CTC regarding the Alturas 299 Improvement Project. This project has been under development since November 2007 and we have been regularly coordinating with the MCTC, Modoc County, and the City of Alturas.

The coordination for this project consisted of a charter development meeting, scope development meetings, three scope validation meetings, and a public survey of stakeholders and property owners within the project limits. More than 90% of the people surveyed approve of the project scope and features proposed.

As a result of the discussions and coordination with the local officials, project features were modified during the development of this project to meet the concerns and expectations of the local agencies and the state highway. The scope of work, as outlined in the Project Report, is as follows:

- Add 8-foot shoulders throughout the project limits to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Widen for future turn pockets west of the BLM Office (PM 39.75 to 40.0).
- Add a left turn pocket at Thomason Street.
- Pave in front of businesses from Juniper Street to Main Street.
- Improve drainage to reduce flooding/ponding in coordination with the City drainage master plan.
- Upgrade RxR crossing light to LED type and install new concrete panels.
- Upgrade road/street intersections.
- Install radar-feedback speed notification signs.
- Place crosswalks at warranted locations. The project report states a flashing beacon could be installed at Thomason Street if warrants are met. Since Project Report approval, a determination has been made that this location does meet the necessary

warrants and the new crosswalk at this location could include a push button operated flashing beacon.

- Improve an existing school bus stop location.

The following provides background on each of the issues outlined in the referenced letter:

**Item #1**

**Issue: Traffic Speeds too high; would like speeds reduced within city limits:**

In 2002, the Department conducted a speed zone study in accordance with the California Vehicle Code. This speed zone study established 35 mph and 45 mph segments through this section of Route 299 in Alturas. Arbitrarily reducing speed limits is a violation of California Vehicle Code, which has been communicated to the MCTC on numerous occasions.

**Outcome: Unresolved – speed to likely increase or stay constant with highway widening.**

To address the concerns expressed by the MCTC, this project proposes radar feedback signs. These are electronic signs that display a vehicle's speed as it approaches the sign. These types of signs have been installed on numerous state routes at various locations and have proven effective in self managing vehicle speeds, particularly through communities.

**Item #2**

**Issue: Drainage regarding localized ponding and icing along segment; coordinate with City's Master Drainage Plan.**

Localized ponding and associated icing issues occur on this segment of Route 299. The Department has worked closely with the City to coordinate drainage improvements with the City's Master Drainage Plan.

**Outcome: Unresolved – wanted storm water to connect to Warner Street drainage; MCTC opted to not continue with project.**

The Department met with City officials in late 2011 and an agreement was reached on how drainage along this section of highway would be addressed. Due to the flat nature of the terrain, it is not feasible to grade or channel all runoff from this area to Warner Street. The project proposes to construct concrete gutters and paved areas that are graded to drain to new and/or existing culvert systems. Drainage from the beginning of the

project to the railroad would perpetuate existing drainage patterns. From the railroad to Main Street, runoff would be directed to existing drainage facilities along Main Street. The city proposed, in its Master Drainage Plan, to eventually extend truck lines north from W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street up two City owned easements that will eventually be N. Nagle Street and Cedar Street to collect runoff. The Department, through the plan outlined above, incorporated this request into the project.

**Item #3**

**Issue: Potential Hazardous Waste at SR 299 and West C; MCTC requested analysis – Concerns with potential cost overruns re: Haz Waste.**

Contaminated soil is present near the intersection of SR 299 and West Street from an abandoned bulk fuel storage facility that existed on private property. This was identified during early investigations performed by the Department. On April 4, 2011, the City requested that Caltrans undertake a complete hazardous waste investigation of the area to identify anticipated hazardous waste levels, a potential remediation plan that includes information on costs associated with clean-up and financially responsible parties. The Department is not in a position to investigate and analyze hazardous waste issues on private property; this can be expensive and is the responsibility of the private property owner. However, the studies that were performed, based on the project footprint and preliminary design, resulted in minimum risk of encountering contaminated soil. This information was presented to the MCTC.

**Outcome: High Risk/unknown costs.**

The Department's studies indicate a low risk of encountering contaminated soil if the project footprint stays within existing state R/W and no more than 12" of excavation is performed. The current scope is within these parameters.

**Item #4**

**Issue: Consider redesign of the SR 299/West C/Juniper Street to realign intersection.**

This item was not included in the scope of work that was established in 2011. Furthermore, in 2001, 2008, and 2011, the MCTC requested specifically the realignment of West C Street not be included in the project. This was based on the risk of encountering hazardous material and the opposition by the City to the Department acquiring R/W for the West C Street alignment in the City's name.

**Outcome: Unresolved – meeting did not occur.**

Informal discussions about the requirement to acquire a surface easement in the City's name remain undesirable. Therefore, the issue was not pursued.

**Item #5**

**Issue: Stand alone pedestrian facility along the south alignment parallel to SR 299.**

A separated pedestrian facility was explored, however; cost and maintenance were two factors that precluded this from being included in the project. The project proposes a Class II bikeway which provides striping a five-foot wide bike path adjacent to the travel way.

**Outcome: Partially met request with undesirable effects.**

During discussions, the Department stated that maintenance of a separated pedestrian facility would become the responsibility of the City. This was not desired by the City.

**Item #6**

**Issue: Reduce the design at RXR crossing if scope reduced to left turn pockets.**

The Department met with City, Railroad, and Public Utilities Commission (PUC) personnel in November 2011, to discuss the project and railroad requirements.

**Outcome: Partially resolved; scope reduced – RXR involvement remain.**

The original scope included new crossing arms...During negotiations, the railroad agreed that the work required would include upgrading the existing crossing light to an LED light and placement of new concrete panels.

**Item #7**

**Issue: Rectify existing drainage issues and not create or exacerbate current drainage issues.**

As mentioned, the Department provided preliminary design information that will address drainage issues identified along this segment.

**Outcome: MCTC reviewed Project Report and did not move forward with final design; action to delete project.**

Preliminary details of the drainage improvements proposed were also provided to the MCTC in layouts and maps and presented during Local Transportation Commission meetings and public meetings. See additional discussion in Item 2 above.

**Item #8**

**Issue: Establish regular monthly meetings.**

One of the expectations given to the Department from the MCTC was to develop this project at the least possible cost. Regular monthly meetings with all functional units can be expensive and was not included in the support budget. The Department suggested project team meetings and focused meetings with stakeholders and functions working on active tasks. The frequency of these meetings would be adjusted based on activities, status, and project schedule.

**Outcome: Unresolved – no meetings occurred.**

Focused PDT meetings have occurred regularly as needed and described above. Many of those meetings may have only consisted of a few people, but these short informal meetings are very effective in keeping the core group informed while managing support costs.

**Item #9**

**Issue: Develop a project timeline with schedule and deliverables.**

A quarterly report including project expenditures, schedule, deliverables, and status of project is provided and presented to the MCTC by the Project Manager.

**Outcome: Unresolved – status document not provided.**

The City requested development of a project timeline including the schedule and deliverables to meet during all phases of the project. This is provided as part of the regular quarterly SB45 reporting process. The Project Status document referenced is generated quarterly which matches the information provided in the quarterly SB45 reports.

**Item #10**

**Issue: Present a monthly Expenditure Report.**

A quarterly report including project expenditures, milestone dates, and status of project is provided to the MCTC.

**Outcome: Resolved – CT Quarterly updates to MCTC.**

Agreed.

**Item #11**

**Issue: Continuous left turn lane not needed.**

The Department eliminated the work to add a continuous left turn lane at the request of the MCTC in 2011.

**Outcome: Resolved – scope reduced in October 2011.**

Agreed.

In conclusion, this project will improve mobility, safety, and drainage along this segment of highway as well as enhancing traffic performance and pedestrian and bicyclist circulation. It will provide benefit to the state highway, local businesses, and alternative modes of transportation.



JOHN BULINSKI  
District Director

JB:lp

Cc: Dave Moore, DDD Planning and Local Assistance  
Eric Akana, Project Manager



**SR 299 Accident Data**

10 yr accident history	4 total	1 deer	3 broadsides
			* 1 @ Warner St
			* 1 @ Juniper St
			* 1 @ West C St

**299 Traffic Volumes**

AADT	4250
AADT year 2030	4600
Level of Service (LOS) 2012	B
+20 yrs LOS	B

City of Alturas population 2827

Business	# Full time Employees
USFS Alturas Headquarters Relocating to City	35
USFS Equipment Shop	15
Bureau of Land Management Relocating to City	20
Grocery Store at 299/Warner	10
Optometrist	6
Grocery Store at 299/US 395 (Main St.)	6

Senior Housing not likely within the next 10 years  
New hospital not likely

Nifty Mobile Home Park			
Type of occupancy and # of spaces			
Permanent	Monthly	RV vacant	Total Spaces
22	7	5	34

Note: 7 school aged children live at Nifty's

