

COUNTY OF NEVADA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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June 29, 2017

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Eric Rood Administrative Center
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

DATE OF MEETING: July 11, 2017

SUBJECT: Letter to Caltrans requesting action on Caltrans State Route 174 Safety Improvement Project

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Attached Letter

FUNDING: Not applicable.

BACKGROUND:

Caltrans has proposed, developed and approved a safety improvement project on State Route (SR) 174 with a cost of \$28.4 million. The project will realign several curves, widen shoulders, add a southbound left-turn pocket at Greenhorn Access Road intersection, and widen the Clear Recovery Zone (CRZ) on SR 174 from Maple Way to You Bet Road, post mile (PM) 2.7 to PM 4.6 in Nevada County. The purpose of the project is to improve safety conditions along the highway. Specifically, the project will bring the section of road up to a design standard that requires 12' wide lanes, 8' wide shoulders, and 20' CRZ beyond the lane line on each side of the highway. Any fixed objects, such as trees or utility poles located within the CRZ will be removed. The project is beginning its Right-of-Way Acquisition Process to purchase resident's existing property along the stretch of impacted highway.

The justification for the project arose out of a study that Caltrans did on SR 174 which determined that the fatal accident rate on SR 174 is 5.6 times higher than the statewide average in comparison to similar stretches of road, and the total accident rate is 2.7 times the statewide average. The Caltrans Project Manager has indicated that the project data was across a period of only three (3) years from 2010-2013.

However, major concerns have been raised by many local residents about the project, including the addition of an 8 foot paved shoulder on the road and the removal of trees and obstacles in the 20' CRZ. Residents who live along the right-of-way have expressed concerns with the clearing and removal of over 100 trees and vegetation that act as natural

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buffers from the road. All of this will affect their property values and quality of life and will leaving them feeling vulnerable. A local walking and bicycling trail that is maintained by the Bear Yuba Land Trust will also be jeopardized by the project. There is an abundance of public concern that by widening the road and lessening the severity of some of the turns, driver speeds and reckless driving will actually increase.

Additionally, I am concerned that the data used to justify this project was from too small a time period of only three years and that additional data should be reviewed from other years to ensure that the accident data used to justify this project is accurate. It should also be noted that while residents are up in arms over this project, residents from the South County in District 2 are requesting a safety project along SR 49.

Therefore, I am requesting the Board to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the attached Letter to Caltrans requesting action on Caltrans State Route 174 Safety Improvement Project to: a) ensure that the data used to justify this project is accurate; b) consider revisions to the project's design that decrease the Clear Recovery Zone in order to maintain the local rural beauty of the surrounding area and minimize the negative impact that it will have on residents; c) increase public outreach for input on the project and its design, and; d) consider a shift of focus to a safety project on SR 49.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heidi Hall".

Heidi Hall
Supervisor, District 1