

South County Traffic Relief Initial Screening – Q&A

1. What is a PSR?

A Project Study Report (PSR) is the formal step to initiate a project in the Caltrans Project Development Process.

2. What happens to the 13 ideas that are not moving into the PSR?

Based on the categorization of ideas within the screening document, ideas not moving forward into the PSR:

- May be advanced by other agencies
- Were determined to be ineffective or premature
- Are not feasible due to regulatory or financial constraints
- Were otherwise determined to be outside the purview of the Caltrans Project Development Process.

To the extent the ideas are not already being advanced by other agencies, they may be studied in the future.

3. Why not include all 20 ideas in the PSR?

A screening of ideas was necessary to advance ideas into the PSR that are within the Agency's jurisdiction and provide substantial mobility benefits.

Based on the four categories and the screening criteria described in the document, a set of seven ideas will be advanced for further study within a PSR. The seven ideas include a broad range of potential alternatives that address the issues articulated by the community in the public outreach process.

4. Why is the PSR going to include ideas 13, 14, 17 which have strong local opposition?

These ideas will be subject to additional traffic study during the PSR phase. Along with the other four ideas being advanced, these ideas will be assessed based on the degree to which they satisfy the project purpose and need and degree to which environmental impacts occur.

As shown in Tables A, B, C of the screening document, these ideas provide some of the highest levels of benefit in terms of reduction in Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) on I-5 and/or on local arterial streets.

5. Why is the PSR going to include ideas 9 and 18, which have strong local opposition?

All seven advancing ideas will be subject to additional traffic study during the PSR phase and will be assessed based upon the degree to which they satisfy the project purpose, need and degree to which environmental impacts occur.

As shown in Tables A, B, C of the screening document, these ideas provide a moderate level of benefit in terms of reduction to Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) on Interstate 5 (I-5) and/or on local arterial streets.

6. Why consider additional widening on I-5?

Ideas 11 and 12 were suggested during the public engagement process and based upon the preliminary benefits summarized in Tables A, B, C, they provide some of the highest levels of benefit in terms of reduction to Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) on I-5 and/or on local arterial streets.

These ideas will be subject to additional traffic study during the PSR phase and they, along with the other five ideas being advanced, will be assessed based on the degree to which they satisfy the project purpose and need and the degree to which environmental impacts occur.

7. Won't the current OCTA plan to add HOV lanes on I-5 from Pico to the County line address the congestion?

The project of adding I-5 HOV lanes from Avenida Pico to the San Diego County line (Idea 10) is being advanced by OCTA. Currently defined as a PSR only, and no funding has been identified. Even with this project, traffic projections from OCTA's 2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan still show a 66% increase in traffic delays by 2040, meaning additional traffic relief projects are still needed.

The idea of adding HOV lanes to I-5 could be considered as a subset of Ideas 11 and 12 for widening of I-5. Ideas 11 and 12 call for a two-lane widening of I-5 from the county line north which is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for San Diego County which calls for adding two managed lanes in each direction on I-5.

8. Why is TCA, rather than other transportation agencies, advancing freeway widening ideas?

TCA, in its role as the sponsoring agency, has been working in collaboration with other local agencies, including Caltrans, OCTA, SCAG, the County of Orange and local cities to solicit traffic relief ideas. Ideas that provide substantial north-south traffic relief will be evaluated during the environmental review process. It is currently anticipated that Caltrans will provide the federal oversight and approval

as the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and that the Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency (F/ETCA) Board of Directors, comprised of elected officials from the County of Orange and South Orange County cities, will provide oversight and approval as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Today, construction of new roads in California is only financed 30% by state and federal tax dollars compared to 80-90% 30 years ago. The financial burden of making up this 70% gap in funding has thus been placed on local city and county governments. To combat this challenge, Orange County has found innovative funding solutions, including Measure M and The Toll Roads, in order to keep up with 21st century transportation infrastructure demands. TCA's model to finance and construct public highways with non-taxpayer funding sources has been an extremely successful method of providing needed transportation projects, when traditional funding from federal and state resources has been lacking or unavailable.

9. *Why did TCA consider mobility improvements that were outside of its scope?*

The governing board of TCA is comprised of local elected officials who after years of gridlock, mandated that TCA conduct a transparent public effort that encouraged public input.

As a result, through a two-year public outreach effort, TCA collected numerous traffic relief ideas from the public and local elected officials. In its efforts to be inclusive of all suggestions, TCA included every idea in the initial screening document.

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10. *Of the list of seven ideas to move forward, why have you shown No. 9 at the top of the list?*

This is not a ranking. The list is arranged in numerical order.

11. *What is the expected outcome of the PSR?*

The expected outcome is a summary of preliminary project costs, traffic and mobility benefits, and environmental impacts, for the range of seven project alternatives. In addition, based on the degree to which each alternative satisfies the Purpose and Need, the PSR will recommend one or more alternatives to be advanced for further study in the Environmental Phase of the project. Note that at the start of the Environmental Phase, there is a public scoping period – in which additional input and ideas may be suggested by stakeholders and members of the public.