

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: June 7-8, 2006

Reference No.: 2.3b.
Action Item

From: CINDY McKIM
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Mark Leja
Division Chief
Design

Subject: **NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 12-ORA-55 KP 12.10 (PM 7.52)**
RESOLUTION S-728

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached Resolution S-728 and map authorizing a new public road connection at Alton Avenue to State Route (SR) 55 in the city of Santa Ana.

ISSUE:

The city of Santa Ana has requested approval of a new public road connection to SR 55. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of a new public road connection as an interchange to SR 55 in the county of Orange, city of Santa Ana, at Kilo Post 12.10 (Post Mile 7.52).

Recommended by: _____
RICHARD D. LAND
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND:

On March 17, 1954, the California Highway Commission adopted SR 55 as a Freeway. SR 55 begins at the Pacific Coast Highway, SR 1, near the city of Newport Beach and runs north to SR 91. This section of SR 55 was brought into the Freeway & Expressway System in 1959 and it is part of the National Highway System (NHS). On October 31, 1962, a Freeway Agreement with the county of Orange was executed for this segment of SR 55.

SR 55 creates a boundary between the cities of Santa Ana and Irvine. Interchanges at MacArthur Boulevard and Dyer Road exist that link these two cities. Growth trends in both cities have generated traffic congestion and have created the need for additional circulation improvements. In 1982, the Irvine Business Complex identified the need for a four-lane overcrossing connecting Alton Avenue on each side of SR 55, and in April 1986, the city of Santa Ana identified the Alton overcrossing as a priority project.

The proposed project would entail construction of a four-lane overcrossing connecting Alton Avenue on each side of SR 55. This addition would add high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) direct access drop ramps to and from SR 55 to the Alton Avenue overcrossing. The purpose of the project is to provide a transportation link across SR 55, support circulation between the cities of Santa Ana and Irvine, relieve local traffic congestion, support planned development and growth in the cities of Irvine and Santa Ana, and improve HOV access as indicated by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

The 2002 traffic studies done in the project vicinity show that congestion is anticipated to increase as urbanization and growth continues. By 2025, 13 of 16 local street intersections studied (cities of Irvine and Santa Ana traffic models) showed that they would operate at an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) E or F. HOV access to and from SR 55 is currently limited to Dyer Road and MacArthur Boulevard. The 2002 traffic studies also showed that traffic volumes resulted in congestion between the Dyer Road and MacArthur Boulevard interchanges and that weaving sections to the mainline resulted in a LOS of F. Construction of HOV direct access ramps at Alton Road would improve conditions at Dyer Road and MacArthur Boulevard. This would reduce HOV traffic from those interchanges and distribute it onto Alton Avenue. This would improve surface street operations as well as the SR 55 mainline operations.

Alton Avenue is not continuous between the cities of Santa Ana and Irvine nor does it currently cross or connect to SR 55. The preferred selected alternative is the Alton Ave HOV direct access ramps. In order to execute this project, Commission approval is required for the new public road connection to SR 55.

The additional HOV access was identified by OCTA in the 1987 Orange County Transitway Concept Design Study, the 1996 Caltrans Route Concept Report, the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Plan, the 2004 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), and the 2004 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The total project cost is estimated at \$63.4 million for construction and right of way. This would include constructing an overcrossing connecting the cities of Santa Ana and Irvine, constructing

HOV direct-access ramps to and from SR 55, and closing the Alton Avenue gap between both cities by extending and widening Alton Avenue to connect to SR 55. The project will receive funding from the city of Santa Ana, the city of Irvine and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). This project is programmed in the 2004 STIP, the 2004 RTIP, and the approved Capital Improvement programs for the cities of Santa Ana and Irvine.

Advisory and Mandatory Design Exceptions were approved on October 2001.

The Department approved the Project Report on April 13, 2006. The Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was submitted to the State Clearing House on February 16, 2006 by the city of Santa Ana. A Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration on November 28, 2005. A concurrent Final Environmental Impact Report is under agenda item 2.2c.(4).

A revised Freeway Agreement was signed by the city of Santa Ana on December 5, 2005, and will be executed by the Department after Commission approval of the new connection.

Attachments

Resolution S-728
Area of Interest Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection
12-Ora-55 KP 12.10 (PM 7.52)**

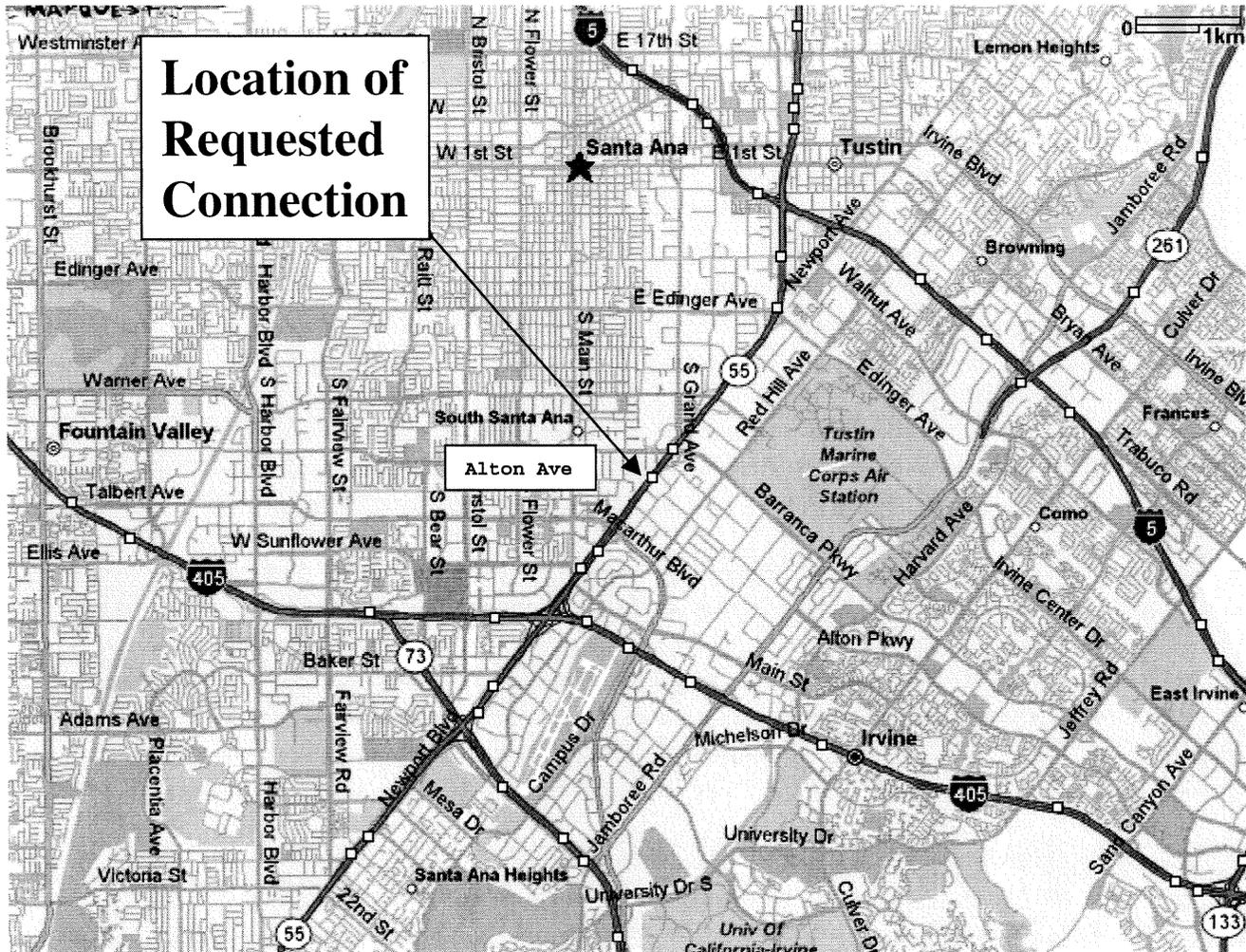
Resolution S-728

WHEREAS, the city of Santa Ana has requested approval of a new public road connection on State Route 55 for the Alton Avenue HOV direct access drop ramps; and

WHEREAS, the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment has been approved in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, the project will have impacts on the environment that will be mitigated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize one new public road connection on State Route 55 at the Alton Avenue HOV direct access drop ramps, KP 12.10 (PM 7.52), in the city of Santa Ana.



12-ORA-55

New Public Road Connection

Area of Interest Map