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To: jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net; Michael.Davies@dot.gov
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2015 8:08 PM
Subject: RE: Lake Tahoe Fanny Bridge Realignment & Requests for Phased Approach

Good evening Jennifer,

Thank you for your email as well as your continued discussion to ensure the Tahoe City community is getting the best possible project. I admire your dedication and commitment to ensure the project balances the proposed improvements with protecting and enhancing the environment. Before I respond to your questions, I wanted to give you an overview of the agency I work for – Federal Lands - so you can see that we have similar interests:

The Office of Federal Lands Highway (FLH), of the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), was established to promote effective, efficient, and reliable administration for a coordinated program of federal public roads and bridges; to protect and enhance our Nation's natural resources; and to provide needed transportation access for Native Americans. Our primary purpose is to provide financial resources and transportation engineering assistance for public roads that service the transportation needs of Federal and Indian lands. The FLH provides these services in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and US Territories through our Headquarters, Eastern, Central, and Western Federal Lands Highway Division offices.

FLH is enabled and entrusted to administer many different programs and types of funds to facilitate transportation improvements for our many Federal Land Management Agency Partners such as: the National Park Service (NPS); USDA Forest Service (Forest Service); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal Governments; Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Department of Defense (DOD); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR).

Our partners rely upon FLH to solve and manage unique program and project challenges that are wide-ranging in environment, geography and complexity, through engineering solutions that are sensitive to the context of the land. Each Division office provides training, technology deployment, engineering services, and products to an increasing array of customers.

We are often confronted by unique terrain, challenging work restrictions, and uncompromising deadlines. Whether it is building highly visible and political projects, constructing roads that are national landmarks, or providing critical access on rural low-volume transportation facilities, FLH is at the forefront delivering consistently distinct and sound engineering.

Since the early 1900's, the Office of Federal Lands Highway (FLH) has assisted its federal land management agency partners in the design and construction of aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sensitive highway and bridge projects. This includes the original planning, design and construction of many roads within our National Parks and National Forests. FLH delivers projects through strong project management from inception to completion, working closely and coordinating constantly with our partners to facilitate delivery. To ensure successful delivery, FLH must apply innovative and diverse solutions to the unique projects we undertake. Context sensitivity, a design philosophy ingrained in our culture, is critical to meeting the unique missions, values and needs of our partners and the public. The FLH works with its partners to build roads that meet the transportation community's standards while balancing, respecting and protecting the resources in which they are located.

As demonstrated over the last 100 years, FLH continues to be called upon to facilitate a wide variety of complex or non-traditional projects involving new or multiple partners. The Federal public roads we service protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, sustain economic development in rural areas, support recreational travel and tourism, resource management and electric power generation, and provide needed transportation access for Native Americans and Alaska/Pacific Natives. Some roads serve as a critical lifeline to communities such as the Metlakatla Indian Tribe who depend on Walden Point Road

near Ketchikan, Alaska. The FLH was asked to lead such regionally significant projects as the construction of the Hoover Dam Bypass over the Colorado River Gorge in Nevada and Arizona and the reconstruction of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House in the District of Columbia. The FLH also works with the Department of Defense, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation and state departments of transportation to assist with a variety of federal and state projects. Great examples are some of the major projects delivered as part of the Defense Access Road Program. Hawaii's Saddle Road, an important cross-island link, provides military and public access to a base, as well as to public lands and forest areas. In Virginia Fort Belvoir's, Mulligan Road Project reopened public roads within the Fort that were closed after the 9/11 terrorist attack. Many FLH projects receive honors and recognition for excellence in design, construction, project management, aesthetics, historic preservation and environmental sensitivity. More information can be found here:

<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/about/>

In regard to your concerns regarding the traffic analysis and recommendations from that analysis, I have summarized the information contained in our traffic report below. The traffic report was vetted through CFLHD, FHWA-Resource Center, Caltrans, Placer County, TRPA, TTD as well as our team of Consultants specialized in traffic modeling/analysis. The project team started with modeling/analyzing the smallest (or least amount of lanes required) roundabout and increased lanes as necessary until the Caltrans and TRPA requirements were met. In other words, the team started with analyzing a single lane roundabout at the wye – which would be the smallest footprint. Here is a summary from the traffic report included as an appendix in the environmental document:

The Caltrans' Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies (dated December 2002) states: "Caltrans endeavors to maintain a target LOS at the transition between LOS "C" and LOS "D" on State highway facilities, however, Caltrans acknowledges that this may not be always feasible and recommends that the lead agency consult with Caltrans to determine the appropriate target LOS."

The Transportation Concept Reports for both SR 89 and SR 28 through the study area state that LOS "E" is the 20-year target level of service for these Caltrans facilities. Therefore, the target level of service for this environmental analysis is LOS "E" for roadway segments. For study intersections that fall under local agency jurisdiction, TRPA-defined LOS "D" operations is still used as the minimum acceptable threshold; however, peak hour LOS "E" is regarded as acceptable if the duration of such operations (based on statistical probability) does not exceed four hours per day. These are the intersection target levels of service for this environmental analysis. TRPA vehicle LOS standards may be exceeded when provisions for multi-modal amenities and/or services (such as transit, bicycling, and walking facilities) are adequate to provide mobility for users at a level that is proportional to the project-generated traffic in relation to overall traffic conditions on affected roadways.

Per TRPA regulations, peak hour LOS "E" is regarded as acceptable if the duration of such operations does not exceed four hours per day. This TRPA regulations is the controlling factor which determined that constructing a single lane roundabout at the wye would not work, as the traffic analysis determined this option would not be acceptable shortly after construction was completed. In other words, if the project proposed a single lane roundabout at the wye, with the replacement of the Fanny Bridge, the project would not have received TRPA Board approval as a recommended alternative. This should not appear in any way as a knock against TRPA, but merely stating the facts of what the local regulations are for this project. Furthermore, the single lane roundabout at the wye with the replacement of Fanny Bridge, in addition to Alternative 6a, would not meet all of the project objectives, as Alternative 1 has proven to do. Since the FHWA is investing funds for a 20 year "design life," the project team is confident in our analysis that concludes a single lane roundabout at the wye by itself would not operate at an

acceptable condition. Furthermore, the phased approach would not fulfill the project goals of addressing the safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists in and through the “we” intersection, as Alternative 1 does.

Finally, in response to your comment regarding the uncontrolled crosswalks in Tahoe City: FHWA recently completed a pedestrian/cyclist Road Safety Audit (RSA) which recommended safety upgrades to address these issues. If funding allows, these recommendations will be included in the CA FLAP SR 89 - Truckee River Bridge Project.

I welcome any further questions or comments you may have, but keep in mind that the environmental document and Alternative 1 was approved by TTD’s Board, TRPA’s Board, Caltrans, Placer County’s Board, and CFL.

Thanks again for your email and Happy Thanksgiving,

Matt

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