

DRAFT
San Joaquin Valley State Route 99 -- Business Plan Outline
September 13, 2005

I. Introduction

Over the last three to four years, various efforts have been undertaken to develop guidance and planning documents for the improvement of the Route 99 corridor through the San Joaquin Valley. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Great Valley Center (GVC) have been key leaders and participants in these efforts. Most recently, Caltrans completed a final draft Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan for the 274 mile segment of Route 99 from its junction with Interstate 5 in Kern County in the south, to the northern limits of San Joaquin County in the north. While this Master Plan focused on enhancing the appearance of the corridor and the driving experience for those using it, it also recognized the need for significant improvements to the route's safety, capacity, operations, and road condition. This Master Plan was developed in conjunction with the GVC, the eight Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in the San Joaquin Valley, and the GVC Route 99 Task Force. Developing a "Route 99 Business Plan" is the next step in these efforts to improve the corridor.

The Department's overall goal for the corridor is to convert all existing expressway segments to freeway status, widen the facility to 6 lanes, improve the condition of the pavement and bridges, complete any needed safety improvements, improve its operational characteristics, and enhance its appearance. The purpose of the Business Plan is to provide a road map for how these goals can be met. This document provides an outline of the Business Plan.

II. Identify Capital Improvements

- A. Identify needed improvements and estimated costs for projects in the following categories:
 - 1. Safety
 - 2. Capacity
 - 3. Major Operational Improvements
 - 4. Significant Rehabilitation Improvements¹ (ex: long life pavement)

- B. Prioritize the identified project improvements.

- C. Identify the Life Cycle costs for the improvement projects. Improvement costs should not just include the initial costs to construct, but also the life cycle costs, including the cost to maintain the facility in the future. While cost should not be the primary criteria used to prioritize projects; cost and project deliverability should be considered as secondary rating criteria.

- D. Identify potential funding sources, both public and private.

¹ Normal rehabilitation and operational improvement projects will typically be included in Caltrans' SHOPP program and are therefore not included here. Appearance and Enhancement projects are not included separately as these types of improvements will typically be included as a part of the overall improvement projects.

III. Identify Appearance Improvements

- A. Identify opportunities to improve the appearance of the highway, facilitate tourism, and enhance economic development in the region through the use of Context Sensitive Solutions, architectural themes, and improved landscaping.
- B. Develop strategies to incorporate these appearance improvement elements into the various types of improvement projects listed in II-A above rather than rely exclusively on stand alone appearance improvement projects.
- C. Identify potential funding sources for facility enhancements².

IV. Determination of Measures, Standards and Interstate Designation

- A. Develop Performance Measures for the route and for the improvement efforts. These would not be limited to traditional transportation performance measures such as “level of service” or “pavement smoothness” but would also include items such as economic development, long term job creation, etc.
- B. Determine appropriate application of Design Standards for the route. While Caltrans Standards mirror the Federal Interstate Standards for all State Freeways, including Route 99, how those standards are applied can vary depending on the physical constraints of the route. The Business Plan will need to identify appropriate strategies for addressing design standards for Route 99 to ensure safe and efficient operations. This will include a discussion of which segments of the route should be built to full Standards, which Standards are vital for the safe and efficient operation of the route, and which Standards could be considered for pursuing exceptions.
- C. Identify how Interstate designation might affect plans to improve the route. If Interstate designation increases the cost of improvement projects, consideration will need to be given to the impact to project priorities and funding availability. Since Caltrans is not the approval authority for design exceptions on Interstate facilities, the Business Plan will need to consider how Interstate designation might impact the ability to seek the type of exceptions discussed in IV-B.

V. Compatibility to Other Route 99 Plans and Efforts

- A. Build consensus on the ideas presented in the Enhancement Master Plan. Seek to have the communities on the corridor adopt themes that provide continuity on the route, but still allow expression of community identity.

² For the purposes of this discussion, “enhancements” are defined as those elements that contribute to the appearance of the facility that are beyond what the Department is typically able to provide.

- B. Identify opportunities to “pool” mitigation funds from various corridor projects to enhance the opportunity to provide substantial mitigation measures and environmental improvement along the corridor.
- C. Identify methods to assist and encourage local land use approval authorities to require adjacent land use to be compatible with the themes established in the Corridor Master Plan. Obtain consensus on Caltrans’ role in this effort.
- D. Identify methods to incorporate the California Hydrogen Highway Network Blueprint Plan, “Hydrogen Highway”, into the planned improvements on the Route. Particular attention will be paid to where potential refueling stations will be located in the corridor.
- E. While not directly a part of the Business Plan, designation of Route 99 as an Interstate Freeway is also a part of the larger Route 99 discussion. In a parallel effort, the Great Valley Center will continue its role of facilitating Valley-wide consensus for Interstate designation. Caltrans will participate in this effort and will provide necessary staff work.

VI. Timeline

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| A. Finalize the Business Plan Outline | September 15, 2005 |
| B. Present Outline to the Governor’s San Joaquin Valley Partnership | September 16, 2005 |
| C. Finalize the Route 99 Business Plan | December 15, 2005 |