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Interstate 5 Transportation Concept Report

Executive Summary

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 2 has prepared this Transportation Concept Report (TCR) for the Interstate (I-5) corridor from the Glenn/Tehama County line to the Siskiyou County/State of Oregon border. The TCR is a 20-year consensus-based vision intended to assist Caltrans, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), cities, counties, and Tribal Governments to manage the I-5 corridor.

During the next 20 years, conditions along I-5 north of Shasta Lake (the Sacramento River Canyon, Shasta Valley, and Siskiyou Mountains regions) are projected to be significantly different than the area to the south (Northern Sacramento Valley region). North of Shasta Lake, traffic is projected to grow at a modest pace from year to year and congestion will generally be found at only a few locations during peak months. South of Shasta Lake, traffic volumes are projected to increase much more rapidly and significant congestion will become an everyday occurrence.

To the north of Shasta Lake, focused projects (passing lanes and extension of truck climbing lanes) and traveler information systems will be appropriate to address projected traffic growth. To the south of Shasta Lake, substantial capacity improvements (conversion from four to six lanes) will be necessary in addition to expanded traveler information systems.

During the next 20 years, local growth and economic development will be the source of most of the increase in traffic on I-5 between the City of Corning and Mountain Gate. Traffic volumes are projected to almost double, creating significant congestion, doubling of travel times, and peak hour speeds as low as 20 mph.

Actions that should be taken between the City of Corning and Mountain Gate to reduce congestion and manage travel demand include:

- Expansion of the freeway from four to six lanes in the following general order based on projected LOS:
 - Knighton Road to Junction State Route 273/North Market Street
 - Tehama/Shasta County Line to Knighton Road
 - South Main Street (Red Bluff) to Tehama/Shasta County Line
 - Liberal Avenue to South Red Bluff
- Operational improvements include adding auxiliary lanes and truck climbing lanes, ramp widening and lengthening, and ramp metering at various locations.
- Placement of additional Intelligent Transportation System elements (Changeable Message Signs, Closed Circuit Television, Traffic Monitoring Systems, etc.) and full cross communications and data exchange between transportation and emergency management agencies.
- Expansion and completion of a parallel road network of local city and county arterials to reduce congestion on I-5 by giving local drivers other options.
- Land use and transportation demand management strategies that include support for shorter trips, increased transit and bicycle/pedestrian access, and carpooling to further lessen demand and congestion.

There is no doubt that the challenges and approaches available to meet those challenges are difficult. Costs associated with the transportation improvements needed in the I-5 corridor clearly exceed the available funding from existing programs. Implementation of additional or new revenue programs to close the gap between available and needed funding will not be easy and will require the cooperation of government agencies at all levels, approval by elected leaders, and support from the general public.