

# DKS Associates

---

8950 Cal Center Drive, Suite 340  
Sacramento, CA 95826-3259  
Phone: (916) 368-2000  
Fax: (916) 368-1020  
E-mail [jpl@dksassociates.com](mailto:jpl@dksassociates.com)

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Placer Parkway Policy Advisory Committee

FROM: John P. Long

DATE: December 9, 1999

RE: Potential process leading to right-of-way preservation P99059-9/Sac

---

The Policy Advisory Committee has narrowed the range of potential options for Placer Parkway by recommending a study area for a Route Adoption Study as well as the general access control and facility type for the Parkway. However, defining a precise alignment that could be preserved (through land use controls, right-of-way dedications and/or right-of-way purchases) will require a more detailed environmental review and public involvement process. This memorandum outlines a potential process for defining a precise alignment for the Parkway so that the right-of-way could be preserved before development precludes desirable alignments.

### Need for Project Study Report

The project development process for building a new roadway facility consists of several phases: planning, design and engineering, right-of-way purchase and construction. All of these phases will be costly and all potential sources of funding will need to be pursued for project implementation. If State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding is pursued, then the California Transportation Commission (CTC) requires that a Project Study Report (PSR), or "PSR Equivalent", be prepared. The PSR follows Caltrans guidelines for such a report and is signed by the Caltrans District Director. A PSR Equivalent would follow similar CTC guidelines and can be signed by a representative of the regional planning agency (i.e., PCTPA).

Fortunately, the process used for the on-going Placer Parkway Interconnect Study has fulfilled most of the requirements of a PSR or PSR Equivalent. The remaining tasks needed to produce a PSR or PSR Equivalent include:

- Preparation of a Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (PEAR) that identifies the environmental issues that may have significant impacts from implementation of the Parkway and would thus need to be addressed in a detailed environmental document. The PEAR is only an initial assessment and could be based on several existing reports that have examined environmental constraints in the proposed study area.
- Preparation of a detailed cost estimate to conduct the NEPA/CEQA environmental document for adoption of the route by the CTC.
- The PSR includes a recommendation that can be used for programming.
- Preparing a document in a PSR format.

The PSR or PSR Equivalent could be completed by the spring or summer of 2000. The Study Advisory Committee could function as the "Project Development Team" that guides a PSR. The cost of the additional

## MEMORANDUM

December 9, 1999

Page 2

work to produce the PSR would likely range from about \$25,000 to \$40,000 and would depend on how specific the recommendation in the PSR needs to be.

In a PSR for a project like Placer Parkway, Caltrans would include a recommended alignment within a 1000-ft wide band. A subsequent detailed environmental review process, however, would need to evaluate alternatives, and the "recommended alignment" in the PSR is subject to change. As a result, defining a recommended alignment would take additional committee meetings and public workshops, and thus would be on the high end of the cost range stated above. Defining a recommended alignment would allow the local jurisdictions the ability to amend their General Plans to include a "plan line" that reflects this recommendation (as discussed in the last section of this memorandum).

Discussions with CTC staff indicates that a PSR Equivalent for Placer Parkway could merely recommend that the study area for the Route Adoption Study that is defined in the Conceptual Plan be used for programming the NEPA/CEQA environmental analysis. The selection of a recommended alignment would then be an outcome of that process. Under this option, the PSR Equivalent would take fewer meetings and would be on the low end of the cost range stated above.

PCTPA recommends that the necessary additional effort be expended to prepare a PSR Equivalent over the coming months to allow the option to use STIP funding for any or all of phases (planning, design and engineering, right-of-way purchase and/or construction) needed to implement the Parkway. At the last Study Advisory Committee meeting, a representative from Caltrans indicated that there would be adequate funds from the FHWA Planning Partnership funds to cover the cost of preparing the PSR.

### **Route Adoption Process**

When Caltrans refers to Route Adoption, they are talking about the State's official process to request that the CTC adopt a route. In the Conceptual Plan for Placer Parkway, we have used the term "Route Adoption Study" for a process that combines the detailed environmental review and public involvement process with the route adoption by the CTC. Most of the time and cost needed to adopt a new route is spent on the detailed environmental studies and the public review process. Local jurisdictions would follow a similar process to adopt an alignment for a new roadway, although the State has, in general, a more extensive environmental and engineering process than found at the local level.

Caltrans has estimated that it would take them 2 to 3 years and \$3 to \$6 million to conduct a full Route Adoption Study. If local government conducts an equivalent study following the Caltrans process, it was estimated to cost between \$2.5 and \$3.0 million and require 18 to 24 months.

### **Preserving Right-of-way for Placer Parkway**

The Policy Advisory Committee has stated that preserving the right-of-way for a precise alignment for Placer Parkway was one of their primary goals. Defining and obtaining environmental clearance for a precise alignment could be accomplished through a full Route Adoption Study, but this would cost between \$2.5 and \$6.0 million. While preparation of a PSR or PSR Equivalent will allow use of STIP funds for this study, Placer and Sutter counties have fully committed their funds for several years. Another possible source for funding this study is a "Congressional Earmark" grant, but this could take years and this type of funding is highly competitive.

As an interim measure, Sutter County and Placer County could amend their General Plans to include a "plan line" that reflects the recommended alignment from the PSR or PSR Equivalent. Amending the General Plan would require a CEQA environmental document, but this could be a relatively low cost "programmatic EIR" since the alignment would be a plan line that is subject to further environmental review.

MEMORANDUM

December 9, 1999

Page 3

The Circulation Diagram of the Placer County General Plan, adopted in 1994, contains a roadway connection that extends from SR 65 at Sunset Boulevard to the Sutter County line about 2 ½ miles north of Baseline Road. It also contains extensions of Watt Avenue and Blue Oaks Boulevard. The County's General Plan states that "the alignments indicated on the Circulation Diagram are adopted plan lines; alternative alignments may be substituted if demonstrated to be feasible and the General Plan is amended. Alignment studies, including environmental review under CEQA, will be required to define precise alignments for these roadways that minimize adverse impacts while meeting the circulation objectives of these new roadways".

The plan line for Placer Parkway in Placer County is not precise enough to readily preserve a right-of-way except in the eastern portion of the Sunset Industrial Area. Yet this plan line provides Placer County a basis for negotiations with developers. Sutter County does not have a plan line for the Parkway and thus has no basis for such negotiations. As an interim measure, it is recommended that Sutter County amend their General Plan to reflect the recommended alignment from the PSR or PSR Equivalent on Placer Parkway. If the recommended alignment in the PSR or PSR Equivalent differs from the plan line in Placer County's Circulation Diagram, then Placer County may also need to amend their General Plan.

PCTPA has had discussions with SACOG, Caltrans, Placer County and Sutter County and believes that it is prudent to take the following actions:

- Prepare a PSR Equivalent over the coming months to allow the option to use STIP funding for any or all of phases (planning, design and engineering, right-of-way purchase and/or construction) needed to implement the Parkway.
- Recommend an alignment in the PSR Equivalent, not just a study area for the Route Adoption Study.
- Request that Sutter and potentially Placer County amend their General Plan(s) to include a plan line that reflects recommended alignment in the PSR Equivalent.
- Pursue all sources of funding to fund a Route Adoption Study as soon as possible.

This potential process is outlined in Table 1, which includes best estimates of the scope, cost, time frame and potential funding sources for each element of the process.

**Table 1  
Potential Process for Right-of-way Preservation**

	Conceptual Plan	PSR	General Plan Amendments	Route Adoption Study	ROW Purchase
Timing	February 2000	Spring/Summer 2000	6 months to 1 year	About 2 years	Unknown
Scope	Conceptual Plan completed	Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report (PEAR)	Programmatic EIR(s) on Amendments to Sutter County (and potentially Placer County) General Plan(s) focused on adoption of a plan line for Placer Parkway.	NEPA/CEQA document and preliminary engineering to support environmental review	Purchase or require dedication of ROW
	PCTPA and SACOG Boards approve Conceptual Plan that defines: - Study area for Route Adoption Study - Policies for Placer Parkway including access control and facility type	Scope and cost of environmental and preliminary engineering	Amend General Plan(s) to include plan line	Public Involvement Program	
		Define Recommended Alignment (subject to change based on environmental analysis)		Designate as Legislative State Route and request CTC to adopt route. (or designate as local facility and local jurisdictions amend General Plans with precise alignment)	
Cost		\$25,000 to \$40,000	\$60,000 to \$200,000	\$2.5 to \$6 million	\$9 to \$15 million
Potential Funding Source(s)	Funded	Funding from FHWA Planning Partnership available	Potential funding source(s) not identified	STIP or Congressional Earmark	STIP
Issues		Required if any State or Federal money is used for Route Adoption, ROW purchase or construction	Cost will depend on the recommended alignment in the PSR.	Funding may not be available for several years	Timing would depend on pace of development