

Capay Valley Vision

P.O. Box 799
Esparto, CA 95627

For Immediate Release

Friday, January 16, 2004

For More Information

Contact: Thomas Nelson
(530) 796-4160
thomas@capayvalleyvision.org

Transportation Concepts for the Capay Valley-Esparto Region

ESPARTO – The Capay Valley-Esparto Region is a uniquely beautiful agricultural and natural setting. The past decade has seen significant change along the Highway 16 Corridor due to new land uses and increased traffic. Given the level of change, a little over a year ago, a team of local residents, transportation-related agencies, and advisory consultants set out to document a set of concepts for transportation improvements of all types to reflect the community's vision of the best possible future transportation system for the Capay Valley Region.

The project, convened by Capay Valley Vision, formed a Transportation Action Team of community representatives to guide the study's preparation. Active members of the team included area residents Trini Campbell, Wyatt Cline, Betty Girtman, Larry Heitman, Linda Herbst, Jan Lowrey, Rudy Lucero, Paul Muller, Frank Rose, Greta Taber, and Helen Voss, as well as representatives from Caltrans, Yolo County and Rumsey Indian Rancheria. Seven action team meetings were held during the preparation of the study. These meetings included a site tour, a meeting with Caltrans, and meetings to prepare for and follow up on three community workshops that were held to collect input for the study. A broad cross-section of the community participated, and lively discussion and debate occurred throughout.

The result of this effort is the soon-to-be-released *Capay Valley Highway 16 Corridor Concept Study*. The 89-page report provides a snapshot of the region's key transportation-related needs, reviews current and planned projects to address them, and presents community-developed concepts to inform projects being planned or considered. Copies will be distributed to the area's citizens general plan advisory committees, Caltrans, Yolo County and the Transportation District, and SACOG. Copies are available through the CVV office at our copying cost of \$10 (see contact info below). Below are a few summarized excerpts of the report.

STUDY CONCEPTS

The study presents a set of general concepts and specific actions and improvements proposed to implement the community's vision of the best possible future transportation system, given the current limits of knowledge and resolution of choices. The overall goal for the future transportation system is to achieve a balance between three major objectives:

- 1.** Provide a safe, complete, and reliable transportation system that serves the needs of Capay Valley residents and visitors.
- 2.** Avoid or mitigate impacts on agricultural, scenic, natural, and economic resources as much as possible in the design of highway and other transportation system improvements.
- 3.** Accommodate all modes of transportation to serve the full range of community needs, including private vehicles, transit, agricultural machinery and transport, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The concepts are informed by and respond to project currently planned or being designed. A number of these concepts encourage Caltrans and/or the Rancheria-sponsored project planners to consider community suggestions for modifications or additions to the current Safety Improvement Project plans. Support for these concepts during Action Team voting and community workshop polling varied.

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND DESIGN PROJECTS

As of the date of this study, several highway improvement projects are in various stages of planning, design, and environmental review. An understanding of these plans and their respective processes is an important basis for development of a long-range vision for transportation improvements in the Capay Valley region. Project summarized in the study include: Caltrans Highway Safety and Improvement projects, Rumsey and Guinda Drainage Improvement Project, Caltrans Super Elevation Improvement and Guardrail Project, Caltrans Transportation Concept Report, CHP Highway 16 Safety Project, Yolo County Highway Bypass Study. Also addressed are several significant Caltrans, Tribe, and County projects, described below.

Caltrans Safety Improvement Project

The Highway 16 Safety Improvement Project (SIP) would upgrade the highway between I-505 and Brooks to current highway design standards to improve and enhance safety along Highway 16. The project is being administered by Caltrans to reduce the number and severity of accidents on State Route 16. This portion of State Route 16 is a 2-lane facility with no shoulders or shoulders measuring only a few feet in width. Over the past few years this portion of the Highway has experienced accidents at a rate approximately twice the statewide average for facilities of this type. Approximately 60% of the accidents involve vehicles going off the road and/or hitting objects, or rear-end collisions.

The primary funding source is expected to be the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), which is a funding program that includes a traffic safety component to improve safety conditions on State Highways. An undetermined amount is expected to be allocated from the SHOPP safety funding for this project. The estimated cost is \$54 million for construction, support, right of way acquisitions, and utility relocations.

Components of the proposed project that are designed to reduce the incidence of runoff-the-road accidents and rear-end collisions on State Route 16 include: 8 foot standard shoulders within a 20 foot clear recovery zone (including 8 foot shoulders); left-turn pockets and right-turn pockets at many public roads; and curve improvements at several locations to improve sight distance.

Timeline/Milestones:

- Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Draft Project Report is anticipated Summer 2004
- Early right of way acquisitions could begin in Summer 2004
- Public Hearing for environmental document expected in Fall 2005
- Completion of final project approval and environmental document by Spring 2006
- Construction is estimated to begin in the summer of 2007 and end in 2009, contingent upon available funding

Caltrans Traffic Calming Project

Caltrans is administering Traffic Calming projects in Esparto and Capay that affect State Route 16. The projects are being designed to reduce the speed of traffic traveling in these communities, enhance pedestrian safety, and heighten driver's awareness that they are entering communities. The traffic calming measures being considered include bulb-outs, textured or contrasting crosswalk surfaces, medians, gateway monuments, and roadside vegetation and lighting.

Currently \$200,000 from Yolo County's Regional Transportation Improvement Program funding has been allocated to complete the environmental assessment and preliminary design phases for the traffic calming project approval and environmental document. Final design and construction funds have not been

Capay Valley Vision

Transportation Concepts for the Capay Valley-Esparto Region (1/16/04)

Page 3 of 4

secured. An estimated construction cost will be developed when the project parameters are more clearly defined.

Timeline:

- Final Project Report & Environmental Document Complete by early 2004
- Design Completed by Fall of 2005 (contingent on available funding)
- Construction to Begin Summer 2006 (contingent on available funding)

Rumsey Rancheria-Sponsored Highway Improvements

The Rumsey Indian Rancheria, or the Tribe, is the sponsor of a series of highway improvement projects with the general objective of improving traffic safety for turning vehicles and highway traffic, with specific objectives as noted below. Many of these improvements would be replaced by the proposed Safety Improvement Project improvements; they are short-term, interim improvements since the Caltrans safety improvements are at least four to five years away. The funding source is Tribal revenue. The cost for these improvements is undetermined at this point because the improvements are still under design.

In 2002 the Tribe and Yolo County signed an agreement regarding the mitigation of impacts of the casino expansion and hotel projects. The agreement calls for the Tribe to pay the County \$2.5 million for road improvements. The Tribe will also pay the County \$43,000 per year for road maintenance. The Agreement calls for the Tribe to build a park-and-ride lot and institute a shuttle service that is mandatory for employees. The Tribe has also agreed to make payments to the County for the costs of off-site mitigation of the impacts of the Casino expansion, which include sewer, water, power, biological, and primarily traffic impacts.

Improvements funded by the Tribe are proposed at seven locations on Highway 16 between the Casino and I-505, as noted below:

1. Casino Frontage: initially, straighten turn at Post Office, create left turn lane, install signs. Eventually realign Route 16 from the horizontal curve north of the Casino (intersection of Road 78), shifting the alignment to the west (consistent with Safety Improvement Project), then running parallel to the existing highway to just south of Taylor Creek (this would include reconstructing the bridge over Taylor Creek). Would include 1 traffic signal.

2. County Road 85: widen the gravel shoulders and pave to 8 feet wide on both sides of Route 16 beginning after the horizontal curve approximately 1/2 mile west of County Road 85 to 492 feet east of the intersection.

3. County Road 85B: install a right turn lane on the eastbound approach to County Road 85B. The right turn lane would improve safety for both turning vehicles and vehicles on the Highway.

4. Yolo Avenue North: install a left turn/through lane on eastbound approach to Yolo Avenue. This project would improve safety for both turning vehicles and vehicles on the Highway. This project is consistent with the Traffic Calming Project and will only be pursued if the Community supports the project.

5. Yolo Avenue South: signalize the intersection and construct a right turn lane on the westbound intersection approach.

6. Road 89: widen Route 16 south of County Road 89, provide a continuous center lane and left turn lanes on the eastbound and westbound intersection approaches, and widen County Road 89 for a right turn lane at the northbound intersection approach. Widen past the migrant center to the east and improve the migrant center driveway for left turns to/from the center.

7. I-505 Northbound off ramp: signalize the ramp intersection. Remove the free right turn and widen the ramp to accommodate a right turn lane.

Timeline/Milestones:

Capay Valley Vision
Transportation Concepts for the Capay Valley-Esparto Region (1/16/04)
Page 4 of 4

- Initial mitigation improvements at Casino (location 1) currently underway, and I-505 Northbound off-ramp, Spring 2004
- Other projects require environmental review process through Caltrans, public comment opportunities; approximate 2 year process prior to construction

Yolo County Studies for Improvement of County Roads

As part of the agreement between the Tribe and Yolo County, Yolo County will receive \$2.5 million for unspecified mitigations to local roads for the impact of Casino traffic. Part of the background work for determining how to spend this money, and for generally responding to increased traffic on County roads, has been the study of possible improvements to County Roads 21A and 85B, which have seen substantial increases in traffic in recent years.

County engineers have assessed the condition of the existing pavement, and have taken traffic counts to determine the warrants for stop signs and other traffic control measures. They are currently in the process of formulating a project description and budget estimate. The basic concept they are pursuing is to improve the pavement and base to a condition that will last for a long period without reconstruction or maintenance. Per typical County road improvement standards, they will also evaluate improving and widening the shoulders as part of this project.

A draft project description has been presented to the Esparto Citizen's Advisory Committee for comment, and will ultimately go to the Board of Supervisors to be considered in light of other County needs and priorities.

ORDER INFORMATION

To order a copy of the complete *Capay Valley Highway 16 Corridor Concept Study*, please contact the CVV office at (530) 796-4160 or send a check for \$10 to: CVV, P.O. Box 799, Esparto, CA 95627. Email inquiries may be sent to info@capayvalleyvision.org.

Capay Valley Vision (CVV), Inc. is a nonprofit organization that works to establish a shared vision for the future of the region and to empower local residents to shape their future. To carry out the Highway 16 Corridor Study, CVV worked with a team of consultants led by Randy Anderson of LandPeople, a land use planning firm. The project team also included a traffic engineer, an economist and environmental planner, and a facilitator. The project was funded, in part, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

###