

Joe - The Saratoga extension is a high priority project. We are doing everything we can to expedite this project, including working with a local developer that is interested in doing the work as mitigation to potential traffic impacts. But regardless of these negotiations, the first step in getting Saratoga moving is to complete an EIR for the extension. DOT is moving forward on this. We will be authorizing a task order to begin the EIR work as soon as we get a responsible estimate from our on-call consultant. This task order should be fully executed before the end of December, and most likely much sooner. Unfortunately I cannot give a good time estimate on when the EIR can be certified since the previous Saratoga project (the one that is currently under construction) had more issues than anticipated. I will gladly give you periodic status reports on this effort if you wish.

I do concur that it would be beneficial to have the Saratoga extension completed before additional work is performed on the El Dorado Hills Blvd interchange. The City of Folsom is eager to finish their remaining portion of Iron Point road. In discussions with them, they have only about 400 feet of Iron Point left and will do that as soon as we have a place for them to connect to. Another significant benefit to the Saratoga extension will be realized when the Empire Ranch Interchange is built by the City of Folsom. Folsom is moving forward on this but are only now finishing up the Environmental Document so the construction is probably off till around 2009/2010.

Because we have a lot of work planned for the EDH area, my staff is reviewing all the projects in the EDH area to coordinate project delivery issues and construction staging problems to minimize costs and public inconvenience. It is important to note that all projects are reviewed to minimize disruption to public traffic. An outcome of this review has been the inclusion of incentive clauses in construction contracts to reward contractors that finish the work early. We also evaluate the impacts to cost, schedule and public inconvenience for performing the construction work at night. We are very concerned about the disruption of the travelling public and we plan to implement every feasible option to minimize the disruption during the EDH Blvd Bridge project. As such, our constructability review of the bridge replacement project indicates that it can be done without taking any lanes out of service except for an occasional lane closure.

I continue to challenge my staff to get projects out quicker. The Saratoga extension will be no exception. It is getting more attention by DOT now than it has in recent history. It will continue to be a focus of our attention until it is completed.

I hope this helps. Let me know if you would like to discuss further.

Richard Shepard, Director  
El Dorado County Transportation Department