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Widening of 13-mile stretch of I-215 gets OK for final design, engineering

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By DUG BEGLEY
The Press-Enterprise

Plans for how to widen Interstate 215 from Perris almost to Murrieta will be finished next summer, under a plan proposed by Riverside County Transportation Commission staff that increases the agency's work with an engineering firm.

The commission's budget committee on Monday approved a plan to have engineering firm URS finalize engineering and design of the project, from Scott Road north of Murrieta to Nuevo Road, north of Perris. The 13-mile stretch is the middle of three adjacent projects along I-215 to widen the freeway from Interstate 15 in Temecula to Highway 60 near Moreno Valley.

If approved by the commission at its meeting next month, URS will be paid up to $14.5 million for the design and engineering work, said Lisa DaSilva, capital projects manager for the transportation agency. The company was chosen because it is already the on-call engineering firm for the transportation commission on major road projects. URS did similar design work on the southern segment of the I-215 widening project.

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"They have been making excellent progress," DaSilva said.

The middle phase of widening I-215 to three lanes and adding a carpool lane from Nuevo Road north to the 60 is the most complex of the three when it comes to design, said John Standiford, deputy director of the transportation commission. Bridges at D Street and Perris Boulevard in Perris must be lengthened to accommodate the larger freeway.

The entire widening project is expected to cost $417 million, including $38.6 million for the southern segment from California's Prop. 1B transportation bond voters approved in 2006.

Work on the southern section of the widening is set to start in 2011, followed a year later by the central section. Construction north of Perris to Riverside is not anticipated until 2012, with all phases finished by 2015.

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