

U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East Improvement Project

City of El Paso de Robles, San Luis Obispo County, California

05-SLO-101-PM 55.6, 56.8/57.9

05-SLO-46-PM 29.7/29.9

05-361500

SCH #2009081041

Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation
and the
City of El Paso de Robles

April 2010



General Information about This Document

What's in this document?

This document contains a Mitigated Negative Declaration, which examines the environmental effects of a proposed project on the U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East Interchange in San Luis Obispo County.

The Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration were circulated to the public from August 11, 2009 to September 11, 2009. Comments received on the draft document and Caltrans' responses to those comments are provided in the Comments and Responses section of this document (Appendix D), which has been added since the draft. Elsewhere throughout this document, a line in the margin indicates a change made since the draft document circulation.

What happens after this?

The proposed project has completed environmental compliance after the circulation of this document. When funding is approved, Caltrans can design and build all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these formats, please call or write to the California Department of Transportation, Attn: Kelso Vidal, Environmental Analysis Branch, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401; (805) 542-4671 Voice, or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2929 (Voice) or 711.

SCH No. 2009081041
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Improvements in and around the U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East Interchange
in the City of El Paso de Robles, County of San Luis Obispo

**INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

4/30/10
Date of Approval


Richard Krumholz
District Director
California Department of Transportation
District 5

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Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to provide operational and access improvements at the 13th Street Bridge over U.S. Highway 101, the U.S. Highway 101 ramp at 16th Street, and the westbound direction of State Route 46 East (State Route 46 East) at and near the U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East interchange (the interchange). The project would also construct an auxiliary lane along U.S. Highway 101 southbound between the on-ramp at State Route 46 East and off-ramp at 17th Street/Riverside Avenue, as well as a ramp meter at the southbound U.S. Highway 101 on-ramp at Spring Street. Throughout this document, the city government is referred to by the official name of the City of El Paso de Robles; more generally the city is called Paso Robles.

Determination

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons.

The proposed project would not have a significant effect on land use and planning, cultural resources, mineral resources, population and housing, recreation, air quality, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, parks and recreation, or transportation/traffic.

Furthermore, the proposed project would have no significantly adverse effect on aesthetic resources and biological resources because the proposed mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to insignificance.

Impacts on aesthetics would be mitigated by:

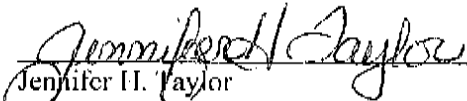
- Implementing a landscape plan as part of the final project design and engineering to address affected oak trees and tree and vegetation replanting or removal.
- Implementing aesthetic treatment to the exposed surface of the southbound U.S. Highway 101 concrete barrier within the project limits.

Impacts on biological resources would be avoided, minimized, or mitigated by:

Mitigated Negative Declaration (Cont.)

- Replanting any oak tree that must be removed at a 10:1 ratio with coordination from Caltrans. Oak trees would be replanted within the vicinity they are removed from or as close as possible to the southbound U.S. Highway 101 area of environmental review.

4/20/10
Date of Approval



Jennifer H. Taylor
Office Chief, Central Region
Environmental South

Summary

Effective July 1, 2007, Caltrans has been assigned environmental review and consultation responsibilities under NEPA pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327. Furthermore, it has been determined under NEPA, that the proposed project is a Categorical Exclusion. Caltrans, in cooperation with the City of El Paso de Robles (City), proposes to relieve local and regional circulation problems and reduce existing and future congestion by improving the existing U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East interchange and nearby roadway facilities. The project is located within San Luis Obispo County (county) on U.S. Highway 101 from 13th Street to State Route 46 East. The post miles are 55.6 and 56.8 through 57.9 along U.S. Highway 101 and post miles 29.7 through 29.9 along State Route 46 East. The proposed project includes the following components to improve traffic circulation in the project area and region:

- Restripe State Route 46 East from the U.S. Highway 101 southbound ramp intersection to the eastern edge of the Salinas River Bridge to provide the westbound traffic with dual left-turn lanes.
- Reconstruct the U.S. Highway 101 southbound on-ramp and widen to two lanes to accommodate dual left-turn lanes mentioned above.
- Construct an auxiliary lane for U.S. Highway 101 southbound between the on-ramp at State Route 46 East and off-ramp at 17th Street-Riverside Avenue.
- Construct U.S. Highway 101 southbound on- and off-ramps at the 17th Street-Riverside Avenue intersection, with traffic signal control.
- Reconstruct the sidewalks and barriers on the 13th Street Bridge to improve the turning radii at the Riverside Avenue-13th Street intersection to allow for adding shoulders to accommodate bicycles and to replace the metal railing with a standard concrete barrier with fencing.
- Reconstruct curb returns at the east side of the Riverside Avenue-13th Street intersection, including bridge wingwalls, to accommodate the new sidewalks.
- Reconstruct the sidewalk and curb returns leading up to the Paso Robles-13th Street intersection.
- Modify traffic signals at the northbound and southbound intersections of the U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East interchange, the Riverside Avenue-13th Street intersection, and the Paso Robles Street-13th Street intersection.
- Install a ramp meter at the U.S. Highway 101 southbound on-ramp at Spring Street.

Summary

The proposed project is programmed in the 2007 San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (San Luis Obispo Council of Governments) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Plan for 2009/2010. One build alternative and the No-Build Alternative are being considered for the proposed project.

Provided below is a summary of potential environmental impacts anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Potential Impact		Build Alternative	No-Build Alternative
Land Use	Consistency with the City of El Paso de Robles General Plan	Consistent with the General Plan.	Not consistent with the General Plan.
Utilities/Emergency Services		Would require utility coordination. Emergency service response times would improve.	No effect on utilities. Emergency services response times may be affected with projected increase in traffic congestion.
Traffic and Transportation		Would relieve local and regional circulation problems and reduce existing and future congestion by improving U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East interchange and nearby roadways.	Congestion would increase.
Visual/Aesthetics		Would result in low to moderate impacts. Removal of 29 oak trees is anticipated.	No effects
Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff		Would result in a net increase of 1.4 acres of impervious surfaces.	No effects
Geology and Soils		Would be subject to seismic ground shaking; however, the proposed project would be designed in compliance with modern seismic safety standards.	Would be subject to seismic ground shaking.
Paleontology		A low-sensitivity formation underlies the area between 13 th Street and the U.S. Highway 101/State Route 46 East interchange; we do not anticipate discovering sensitive paleontological resources.	No effects
Hazardous Waste		Aerially deposited lead contamination may be encountered during construction, as well as lead-based paint in roadway pavement markings. Asbestos-containing material also may be encountered during structure (i.e., bridge) demolition.	No effects
Natural Communities		(1) Project is confined to areas previously disturbed by public and infrastructure and supports little native habitat. Temporary effects	No effects

Summary (Cont.)

Potential Impact	Build Alternative	No-Build Alternative
	on 4.3 acres of disturbed oak woodland and non-native grasslands and weeds. (2) Permanent effect on 3.3 acres of disturbed oak woodland and non-native grasslands and weeds.	
Plant Species	Located within a highly degraded area, and the project would affect only commonly occurring, native and non-native plant species. Oak trees would be removed.	No effects
Cumulative Impacts	While planned development projects in the immediate area would introduce new construction activities and an increased level of traffic in addition to the proposed project, the Build Alternative would improve an existing interchange; therefore, no adverse cumulative impacts are anticipated.	Development would continue at immediate and surrounding areas. Traffic and congestion would continue to degrade under this alternative.
Parks and Recreation	Would not affect the designated or intended use of parks or recreation facilities.	No effects
Noise	No substantial noise-related impacts would occur. Long-term (i.e., operational) impacts would result in a maximum increase of 3 dBA at receptors (e.g., residences) subject to noise impacts. Although acoustically feasible (i.e., provide minimum 5 dBA reduction), construction of a noise barrier at receptors subject to impact would not be reasonable from a cost perspective.	No effects

Summary

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List of Abbreviated Terms

AADT	annual average daily trips
AB	Assembly Bill
ACOE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
ADL	aerially deposited lead
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AQAP	Air Quality Attainment Plan
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
AST	aboveground storage tank
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BSA	biological study area
CAA	Clean Air Act
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Clean Air Plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFGF	California Fish and Game Code
City	City of El Paso de Robles
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CO	carbon monoxide
County	San Luis Obispo County
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DPM	diesel particulate matter
GHG	greenhouse gas emissions
handbook	California Environmental Quality Act Air Quality Handbook
HDM	Highway Design Manual
lbs/day	pounds per day
L_{eq}	equivalent continuous noise level
L_{max}	maximum sound level
LOS	level of service
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
mph	miles per hour
MTBE	methyl tertiary butyl ether
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO	nitric oxide
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NO _x	oxides of nitrogen
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NSSP	Non-Standard Special Provisions
O ₃	ozone
Pb	lead
PM	particulate matter

List of Abbreviated Terms (continued)

PM	post mile
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter
ppm	parts per million
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SGP	Strategic Growth Plan
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SO _x	oxides of sulfur
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Plan
TBA	tertiary butyl alcohol
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
tons/quarter	tons per quarter
TPH-g	total petroleum hydrocarbons as gasoline
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
vph	vehicles per hour