

# Echo Summit Rock Wall Parapet Replacement/ Water Quality Improvement Project

EL DORADO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
DISTRICT 3 ED 50 (PM 66.7/67.8)  
1E14U

## Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment [and Section 4(f) Evaluation] With Finding of No Significant Impact



Prepared by the  
State of California Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by the Department under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327.

**December 2009**



## General Information About This Document

### *What's in this document?*

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, prepared an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment/ Section 4(f) Evaluation, which examined the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project located on US Highway 50, El Dorado County, California. This document described why the project is being proposed, alternatives for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, and potential impacts from each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

The Initial Study/Environmental Assessment/ Section 4(f) Evaluation was sent to the State Clearinghouse for official circulation and public review, (pursuant to CEQA, and in compliance with NEPA) from April 24, 2009 to May 26, 2009. This document includes all written comments received and Caltrans responses to those comments (See Chapter 3)

Caltrans provided copies of the draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, appended to the Draft Environmental Assessment, to the Department of Interior (DOI) on April 30, 2009 (see Appendix F for copy of letter). Caltrans received no comments from DOI within 60 days of the confirmed delivery date of May 1, 2009.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Department of Transportation, Attn: Brenda Powell-Jones, Environmental Planning, 2800 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento CA 95833; (916) 274-5911 Voice, or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2929 (Voice) or 711.

SCH# TBD  
03-ED-50-PM 66.7/67.8  
EA 03-1E14U

Echo Summit Rock Wall Parapet Replacement and Water Quality Improvement  
Project on US 50 at Echo Summit, PM 66.7 to PM 67.8 in El Dorado County

**INITIAL STUDY with  
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
Section 4(f) Evaluation**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code  
(Federal) 42 U.S. Code 4332(2)(C) and 23 U.S. Code 327 and 49 U.S. Code 303

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

April 13, 2009

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Approval

Original Signed by

\_\_\_\_\_  
John D. Webb  
Chief, Office of Environmental Service – South  
California Department of Transportation

## Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

### ***Project Description***

Caltrans proposes to upgrade the deteriorating masonry rock wall parapets at seven locations on US Highway (US) 50 in El Dorado County from Robbins Run Sidehill to Rockwall Sidehill 2 (within the proposed project limits: PM 66.7/67.8) by constructing modified Type 736 concrete barriers on Portland cement concrete slabs. The proposed project will also include replacement or lining of existing cross culverts, digging out and replacing areas of loose and damaged asphalt concrete pavement and placing a ¾-inch asphalt overlay.

### ***Determination***

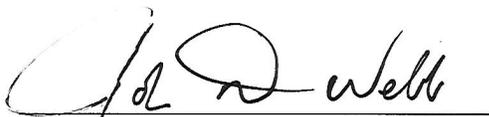
Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project will have no effect on: Land Use, Growth, Farmlands/Timberlands, Utilities, Environmental Justice, Hydrology and Floodplains, Geology/Soils, Paleontology, and Special Status Species (plant or animal).

In addition, the proposed project would have no significant effect on: Traffic and Transportation, Aesthetics, Water Quality, Hazardous Waste, Wetlands and Other Waters, Noise, Air Quality, and Community Impacts.

In addition, the proposed project would have no significantly adverse effect on a historic property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, because the following mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to insignificance:

- Replacing the rock parapet walls with methods and materials that mimic the texture and color of the existing rock parapet walls would mitigate the adverse affects to Upper Meyers Grade.



John D/Webb, Office Chief  
Office of Environmental Service - South  
California Department of Transportation

29 December 2009

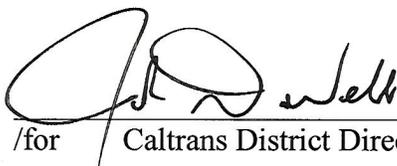
Date

**California Department of Transportation  
Finding Of No Significant Impact  
For**

Echo Summit Rock Wall Parapet Replacement/ Water Quality Improvement Project  
US Highway 50 in El Dorado County, near Echo Summit

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that the proposed project to upgrade deteriorating rock wall barriers and replacing and/or lining culverts will have no significant impact on the human environment. This FONSI is based on the attached EA which has been independently evaluated by Caltrans and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required. Caltrans takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached EA.

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327.

  
/for Caltrans District Director

29 December 2009  
Date



## Summary of Potential Impacts and Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

Resource	Potential Impact	Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures
<b>Traffic and Transportation</b>	Traffic delays to the driving public due to lane closures for purposes of constructing the project.	Implementation of Traffic Management Plan and extensive Public Outreach Program to inform public of upcoming lane closures.
<b>Visual/Aesthetics</b>	The replacement of the wall will improve the safety and improve the visual quality of the area by providing a more uniform appearance to the existing wall.	The new barrier wall shall be constructed in such a way that will mimic the texture and color of the existing wall.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	Replacement of the rock parapet walls will have an adverse effect on Upper Truckee Grade, a National Register Eligible, historic property	Per Memorandum of Agreement between Caltrans, SHPO and US Forest Service, the new barrier wall shall be constructed in such a way that will mimic the texture and color of the existing wall.
<b>Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff</b>	The project may have minimal impacts during construction to Upper Truckee River (below Christmas Valley), which eventually flows into Lake Tahoe after flowing approximately ten miles north.	Caltrans BMPs and practices will be implemented to prevent receiving water pollution as a result of construction activities related to the Echo Summit Rockwall project.
<b>Hazardous Waste/Materials</b>	Hazardous materials have not been identified within the project limits.	Although there is no identified potential for hazardous materials to occur during the construction of this project, USEPA and El Dorado County must be notified 10 days prior to demolition activities per NESHAP requirements.
<b>Air Quality</b>	Potential for construction related dust and exhaust emissions	Measures to be included in contract specifications to reduce the potential for fugitive dust and reduce exhaust emissions.
<b>Noise</b>	During construction, noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. Depending on the lane closure strategy that is ultimately chosen for construction of this project, construction activities may occur in the nighttime hours as well as during the day.	Measures shall be implemented to ensure that impacts related to construction noise remains minimal.
<b>Wetlands and other Waters</b>	Wetlands have been identified near the project study area at the Echo Summit Maintenance station; Construction of this project will not directly impact jurisdictional wetlands. Because the maintenance station may be used for equipment storage and staging, measures will be implemented to ensure there are no impacts to identified wetland areas.	Areas delineated as jurisdictional wetlands shall be protected by orange fencing and designated as environmentally sensitive areas that may not be used or disturbed by construction equipment or materials.

Summary

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>	<b>Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures</b>
<b>Invasive Species</b>	A minimal risk exists for construction equipment to spread noxious weeds into the project area from areas outside the project work areas.	Although no areas of noxious weeds were identified within the project limits, measures shall be implemented to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species into the project area. These measures include activities such as requiring construction equipment to be cleaned before entering the work areas.

# Table of Contents

Mitigated Negative Declaration .....	v
California Department of Transportation Finding Of No Significant Impact For .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	xi
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Abbreviated Terms.....	xiv
Chapter 1 Proposed Project .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Purpose and Need .....	1
1.2.1 Purpose .....	1
1.2.2 Need.....	1
1.3 Background / Environmental Setting.....	1
1.4 Alternatives.....	3
1.4.1 Build Alternative/ Preferred Alternative .....	3
1.4.2 No-Build Alternative .....	6
1.4.3 Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn.....	6
1.5 Permits and Approvals Needed.....	9
Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures .....	11
2.1.1 Community Impacts .....	13
2.1.2 Emergency Services .....	16
2.1.3 Traffic and Transportation.....	18
2.1.4 Visual/Aesthetics.....	23
2.1.5 Cultural Resources.....	29
2.2 Physical Environment .....	34
2.2.1 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff.....	34
2.2.2 Hazardous Waste or Materials.....	39
2.2.3 Air Quality .....	41
2.2.4 Noise and Vibration.....	45
2.3 Biological Environment.....	51
2.3.1 Wetlands and Other Waters.....	51
2.3.2 Invasive Species .....	54
2.4 Climate Change under the California Environmental Quality Act.....	55
Chapter 3 Comments and Coordination .....	63
Chapter 4 List of Preparers.....	69
Chapter 5 Distribution List.....	70
Appendix A California Environmental Quality Act Checklist.....	73
Appendix B Tahoe Regional Planning Agency – Initial Environmental Checklist ..	83
Appendix C Section 4(f) Evaluation .....	99
1.1 Introduction.....	99
1.2 Description of Proposed Project .....	100

*Table of Contents*

1.3	Description of Section 4(f) Property.....	101
1.4	Impacts on Section 4(f) Property .....	102
1.5	Avoidance Alternatives.....	103
1.6	Measures to Minimize Harm .....	105
1.7	Coordination .....	106
1.8	Least Harm Analysis.....	107
1.9	Concluding Statement.....	109
Appendix D	Title VI Policy Statement.....	110
Appendix E	Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary .....	112
Appendix F	Agency Concurrence / Correspondence.....	119
Appendix G	Memorandum of Agreement .....	121
Appendix H	Project Photographs (Existing and Proposed).....	123
Appendix I	Project Layout Sheets.....	132
Appendix J	Maps of Planned Caltrans Projects in the Tahoe Basin and I-80 corridor 134	
Appendix K	List of Technical Studies that are Bound Separately .....	136

## List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map .....	7
Figure 1-2 Project Location Map .....	8
Figure 2.1.4a Views from the road .....	27
Figure 2.1.4b Views of the road from below .....	27
Figure 2.4.1 California GREENHOUSE GAS Inventory .....	57
Figure 2.4.2 Outcome of Strategic Growth Plan .....	59

## List of Tables

Summary of Potential Impacts and Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures .....	ix
Table 2.2.4a Typical Construction Noise Levels .....	49
Table 2.4.1 Climate Change Strategies .....	60

## List of Abbreviated Terms

ADL	Aerially Deposited Lead
APE	Area of Potential Effect
BMP	Best Management Practices
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNEL	Community Noise Level Equivalent
CWA	Clean Water Act
DOT	Department of Transportation
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FOE	Finding of Effect
HRER	Historic Resource Evaluation Report
Lahontan	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
LRWQCB	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
LTBMU	Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
LTHU	Lake Tahoe Hydrologic Unit
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESHAP	National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
NOC	Notice of Construction
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
PM	Post mile
PS&E	Plans Specifications and Estimates
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SEZ	Stream Environment Zone
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SOIS	Secretary of Interior Standards
SWMP	Storm Water Management Program
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program
TRPA	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WPCP	Water Pollution Control Program