

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: February 25-26, 2004

Reference No.: 2.2b.(1)
Action Item

From: ROBERT L. GARCIA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Gary R. Winters
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Ref: **SUMMARY – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, STATE ROUTE 140 IN
MERCED COUNTY – REPLACE OVERHEAD BRIDGE IN MERCED**

ISSUE:

The California Transportation Commission (Commission) is being asked to review and comment at the February 2004 Commission meeting on the following Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR):

- Route 140, KP 58.7/60.5 (PM 36.5/37.6). Replace overhead bridge in Merced.

PROGRAMMING:

The total project cost is \$35,500,000. The project is currently programmed for \$19,400,000 (capital) in the proposed 2004 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP). The Region plans on programming \$12,700,000 (capital and support) in Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funds and reprogramming \$3,400,000 in right of way capital from the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) into the 2004 STIP. The project will be fully funded and is scheduled for construction in Fiscal Year 2006-2007.

ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:

- No-Build.
- Alternative 1 – Construct new Bradley Overhead Bridge and make roadway improvements, widen the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane highway with a continuous left-turn lane.
- Alternative 2 – Construct new Bradley Overhead Bridge and make roadway improvements, widen the existing two-lane highway to a two-lane highway with a continuous left-turn lane.

POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

- Cultural resources
- Displacements
- Noise
- Visual quality

PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:

The following measures to minimize harm are proposed if Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 is selected:

- Comply with the terms of the final Memorandum of Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office to mitigate for the loss of the existing historic Bradley Overhead Bridge.
- Assist displaced occupants through the Relocation Assistance Program.
- Construct a soundwall.
- Plant trees and shrubs.

Attachments

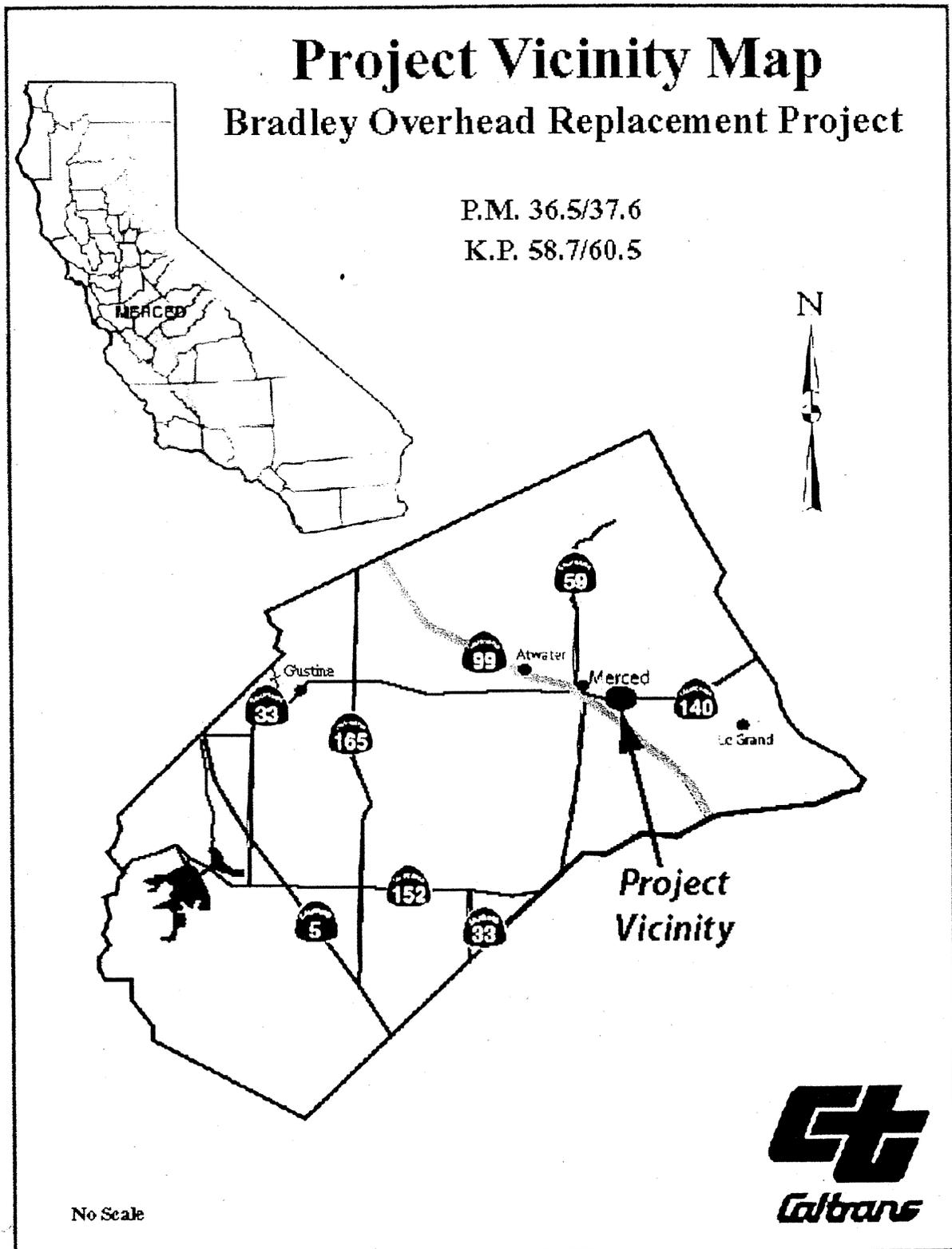


Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

Summary

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to improve 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) of State Route 140 in Merced by widening the two-lane highway from Marthella Avenue to 0.26 kilometer (0.16 mile) east of Santa Fe Avenue. The Bradley Overhead Bridge would be replaced with a new bridge. Both Baker Drive and Santa Fe Avenue would be realigned, and signals would be added at Kelly Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue.

The purpose of the proposed widening of State Route 140 is to correct non-standard design features, alleviate local street traffic congestion, and accommodate future traffic demands within the project area.

The current Bradley Overhead Bridge does not meet current design standards for the following reasons:

- 1) There are no shoulders on the bridge.
- 2) The steel bridge railings do not meet current standards.
- 3) There is inadequate stopping sight distance on the bridge to Kelly Avenue and the entrance/exit of Joe Herb Park.
- 4) The vertical curve at the top of the bridge limits views of the intersections at both ends of the structure.
- 5) Both the existing vertical clearance from the bridge to the railroad tracks and the horizontal clearance between the bridge columns are non-standard.

Two local streets, Baker Drive and Santa Fe Avenue, do not meet current design standards because the turning radii at these intersections are insufficient for large trucks turning on and off of State Route 140.

Two build alternatives, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, and a no-build alternative are under consideration. The build alternatives would replace the existing Bradley Overhead Bridge with a new structure that has shoulders and sidewalks. Under both build alternatives, the existing continuous left-turn lane would remain and a continuous left-turn lane would be incorporated into the new Bradley Overhead Bridge. Traffic signals would be added at Kelly Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue. Santa Fe Avenue and Baker Drive would be realigned. Sidewalks would be built along the north side of the highway, and drainage basins are proposed to alleviate additional runoff from the new roadway.

The proposed bridge design would require closing the current access to State Route 140 for the Sierra Portal Mobile Home Park entrance and the eastern exit of Joe Herb Park. A new access would be created for the mobile home park just south and west of the existing entrance through Joe Herb Park. Internal park traffic circulation and facilities would be modified with additional two-way traffic.

Alternative 1 would widen the existing two-lane highway to a four-lane highway with a continuous left-turn lane. The new Bradley Overhead Bridge would consist of four-lanes with a continuous left-turn lane.

Alternative 2 would widen the existing two-lane roadway to a two-lane highway with a continuous left-turn lane. The new Bradley Overhead Bridge would consist of two-lanes with a continuous left-turn lane.

The No-Build Alternative would not correct the design concerns, alleviate traffic congestion, or accommodate future traffic demands in the project area. The project alternatives are explained in detail in Chapter 2.

Potential environmental impacts are listed in the Summary of Potential Impacts from Alternatives below and are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Summary of Major Potential Impacts From Alternatives

Potential Impact		Alternative 1	Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Business displacements		6	6	No Changes
Housing displacements		5	5	No Changes
Utility service relocation		1	1	No Changes
Consistency with the Merced General Plan		Consistent with city and county General Plans	Consistent with city and county General Plans	Not consistent with city and county General Plans
Air quality		Does not worsen any existing conditions or create new violations	Does not worsen any existing conditions or create new violations	No Changes
Noise	# of receptors (homes, businesses, etc.) greater than or equal to 66 decibels	7	7	7
Water quality		Causes no long-term impacts	Causes no long-term impacts	No Changes

Increase in Floodplain	Would not affect the watercourse or associated floodplains	Would not affect the watercourse or associated floodplains	No Changes
Cultural resources	No impacts to archaeology resources. One historic resource would be affected.	No impacts to archaeology resources. One historic resource would be affected.	No Changes
Visual quality	Trees would be removed	Trees would be removed	No Changes