

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 24, 2012

Reference No.: 2.2c.(3)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Jay Norvell
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
12-ORA-91, PM R14.43/R18.91, 08-RIV-91, PM R0.00/R13.04, 08-RIV-15, PM 35.64/45.14
RESOLUTION E-12-61**

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-12-61.

ISSUE:

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- State Route 91 (SR-91) and Interstate 15 (I-15) in Orange and Riverside Counties. Corridor improvements including lane widening and interchange improvements along a portion of SR-91 and SR-15 in and near the cities of Norco, Corona, and Yorba Linda. (PPNO 0077J)

This project in Riverside and Orange Counties will widen the SR-91 Corridor, including constructing one mixed-flow lane in each direction, one auxiliary lane in each direction, high-occupancy or tolled express lanes, and direct high-occupancy or tolled express lane connections between SR-91 and I-15. The project is programmed in the 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program. This project is included in the Design-Build pilot program. The total estimated cost for capital and support is \$1,300,517,000. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2012-13. The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope programmed in the 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources that may be impacted by the project include: land use, employment, farmlands, community cohesion, relocations, visual and aesthetics, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, water quality, geology and soils, hazardous waste, noise, biological resources, and wetlands. Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance through proposed mitigation measures with the exception of noise, impacts to oak woodlands, adverse effects to human beings, and cumulative impacts. As a result, a Final Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the project including a statement of overriding considerations.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding

**12-ORA-91, PM R14.43/R18.91, 08-RIV-91, PM R0.00/R13.04, 08-RIV-15, PM 35.64/45.14
RESOLUTION E-12-61**

- 1.1** **WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
- State Route 91 (SR-91) and Interstate 15 (I-15) in Orange and Riverside Counties. Corridor improvements including lane widening and interchange improvements along a portion of SR-91 and I-15 in and near the cities of Norco, Corona, and Yorba Linda. (PPNO 0077J)
- 1.2** **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3** **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.4** **WHEREAS**, the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.5** **WHEREAS**, a Statement of Overriding Considerations was prepared; and
- 1.6** **WHEREAS**, Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.
- 2.1** **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby approve the above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR THE STATE ROUTE 91 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The State Route 91 (SR-91) Corridor Improvement Project (CIP) includes capacity, operational, and safety improvements and would widen existing SR-91 from the SR-91/State Route (SR) 241 interchange in the Cities of Anaheim and Yorba Linda in Orange County to Pierce Street in the City of Riverside in Riverside County. The project also includes improvements to Interstate 15 (I-15) in Riverside County between the I-15/Cajalco Road interchange in the City of Corona and the I-15/Hidden Valley Parkway interchange in the City of Corona.

The following information is presented to comply with the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the project, which is the basic source for this information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

1.0 AESTHETICS

1.1 Adverse Environmental Effects

As discussed in Sections 3.7, Visual/Aesthetics, and 4.2.3.1, Aesthetics, in the Final EIR, the project will result in the following impacts related to aesthetics and visual resources:

- Low to moderate changes in the visual quality of the study area as a result of the expanded right-of-way; modified and new ramps, overcrossings and bridges; concrete barriers; and new retaining, tieback, and sound walls.
- The permanent structures provided by the project, including bridges, overcrossings, structural supports, retaining and sound walls, and traffic control devices, may be attractive targets for graffiti.
- Community character would be affected by the project as a result of the expanded right-of-way, which would add additional hardscape, graded and paved slopes, modified and new ramps, overcrossings and bridges, concrete barriers, and new retaining, tieback, and sound walls. These changes would modify the visual quality of the area by introducing more urbanized and hardscape elements and, as a result, would affect the existing character of the communities along the project segments of SR-91 and I-15.
- On local streets that cross SR-91 and I-15, the widened freeway cross sections would result in wider overcrossings and undercrossings, which would increase the lengths of the roads and sidewalks that are on the overcrossings or in the undercrossings. Therefore, the amount of time pedestrians and bicyclists spend on overcrossings or in undercrossings would increase compared to existing conditions. The new parts of the undercrossings would include lighting for vehicles

and pedestrians consistent with local standards. However, the segments of those roads under the overcrossings would experience a reduction in the amount of natural light, which could be perceived by pedestrians and bicyclists as adversely affecting their experience crossing under SR-91.

- The project would result in an adverse impact to a segment of SR-91 that is eligible for designation as a State Scenic Highway.

1.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects as identified in the Final EIR.

1.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to aesthetics and visual resources to below a level of significance:

- **Measure V-1:** Mitigation and minimization elements and structure enhancements including treatments and plantings for sound walls, retaining walls, and slope paving consistent with the 215/91 Corridor Master Plan.
- **Measure V-2:** Replacement planting and landscaping consistent with the 215/91 Corridor Master Plan.
- **Measure V-3:** Use of light fixtures with non-glare hoods, and focusing light fixtures to illuminate project features and the project right-of-way only.
- **Measure V-4:** Graffiti reduction, removal, and control with anti-graffiti coatings, wall texturing, aesthetic surface treatments, and plantings, and continued implementation of Caltrans' and the City of Corona's existing graffiti control and removal programs.
- **Measure T-4:** Provision of additional lighting in wider undercrossings.

2.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

2.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.17, Natural Communities, and 4.2.3.2, Biological Resources, in the Final EIR, the project would result in direct temporary effects to natural communities of special concern through disturbance and/or removal of existing vegetation. Temporary effects are limited to incidental encroachment to three natural communities: coastal sage scrub (CSS), riparian/riverine, and oak woodland. The project would also result in permanent impacts to CSS, riparian/riverine, and oak woodland.

Because the maturation of oak trees requires 40–80 years, the direct removal of oak trees and oak habitat would result in an unavoidable short-term loss of habitat that cannot be mitigated to below a level of significance. The project would result in 0.02 ac of direct permanent effect to oak woodland habitat, which would be significant unavoidable adverse impacts of the project.

The project would result in temporary, but not significant, adverse impacts on wildlife movement during construction. Those temporary impacts would be mitigated to below a level of significance based on implementation of Measures NC-6 through NC-16, and NC-20. The project would not result in adverse impacts related to wildlife movement after the completion of construction.

The project would result in 3.09 ac of permanent effects to CAGN-designated critical habitat and chaparral communities in the same areas. The project would not result in direct take of CAGN.

The project would not result in the direct take of least Bell's vireo (LBV) or LBV-designated critical habitat. The project would result in the take of 0.82 ac of LBV-occupied riparian/riverine habitat.

The project would result in direct permanent effects to approximately 5.7 ac of the Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) conservation fee area.

The permanent loss of suitable riparian habitat under the project described above would limit the potential habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and bald eagle. These effects to these species would be similar to those described above for riparian communities and permanent impacts to LBV.

As discussed in Sections 3.21, Threatened and Endangered Species, and 4.2.3.2, Biological Resources, in the Final EIR, because LBV is likely to occur in or near the disturbance limits at the time of project construction, the project could result in potential indirect temporary effects to LBV during construction. Those effects could include increased exposure of LBV to noise, vibration, dust, and human presence. Potential indirect effects could also occur during construction to the CAGN and Braunton's milk-vetch.

As discussed in Sections 3.18, Wetlands and Other Waters, and 4.2.3.2, Biological Resources, in the Final EIR, the project would result in temporary and permanent effects on jurisdictional and other waters. The potential temporary effects of the project on United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) jurisdictional and nonjurisdictional areas are summarized in Table 3.18.3 in the Final EIR. As discussed in Section 3.18, the project would result in temporary and permanent effects on wetland or nonwetland waters of the United States (i.e., areas under Corps jurisdiction) as well as to California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdictional areas.

2.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

2.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to biological resources and waters to below a level of significance:

- **Measure NC-1:** Delineation of environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) around CSS, chaparral, and riparian/riverine vegetation.
- **Measure NC-2:** Monitoring in the vicinity of ESAs by a Designated Qualified Biologist.

- **Measure NC-3:** Removal of trees and construction activities outside the bird nesting season from February 15 to September 15.
- **Measure NC-4:** Appropriate firefighting equipment on site during construction in the fire season.
- **Measure NC-5:** Identification of nonsensitive upland habitat areas for equipment maintenance, construction staging, and other temporary uses during construction.
- **Measure NC-6:** Identification of existing wildlife fencing and installation of new and replacement fencing during construction.
- **Measure NC-7:** Identification and restoration of habitat adjacent to Coal Canyon, B Canyon, Fresno Canyon/Wardlow Wash, and Bedford Wash that will be disturbed during project construction.
- **Measure NC-8:** Delineation of all wildlife corridors within and in the immediate vicinity of the project footprint on the project plans as ESAs.
- **Measure NC-9:** Development and implementation of design and construction management measures to direct noise and lighting away from specific areas of biological sensitivity designated in this measure.
- **Measure NC-10:** Requirement to keep wildlife corridors free of equipment or other structures that could be barriers to wildlife passage.
- **Measure NC-11:** Design and implementation of modifications to overcrossings and culverts to maintain openness ratios suitable for large mammals.
- **Measure NC-12:** Restrictions on night construction adjacent to Coal Canyon, B Canyon, Fresno Canyon/Wardlow Wash, and Bedford Wash except when evening or night construction is required for operational reasons.
- **Measure NC-13:** Restrictions on construction at bridges/culverts at Coal Canyon, B Canyon, Fresno Canyon/Wardlow Wash, and Bedford Wash to avoid blocking existing wildlife corridors in those areas.
- **Measure NC-14:** Limits on construction staging in Coal Canyon and avoiding this area from February 15 to September 1.
- **Measure NC-15:** Requirements during construction in Coal Canyon that the existing on- and off-ramps remain open at all times for use by emergency responders.
- **Measure NC-16:** Requirement to close the gates at Coal Canyon at the end of each construction day.
- **Measure NC-17:** Identify existing and proposed conservation areas on the project plans consistent with the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Western Riverside County MSHCP) and compliance with the Western Riverside County MSHCP guidelines included in the project specifications.
- **Measure NC-18:** Identification of Criteria Areas on the project plans, with applicable Western Riverside County MSHCP Guidelines.
- **Measure NC-19:** Compliance with the Western Riverside County MSHCP Construction Guidelines and Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs).

- **Measure WET-1:** Obtain a Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the Corps.
- **Measure WET-2:** Obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFG.
- **Measure WET-3:** Obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the RWQCB.
- **Measure WQ-1:** Compliance with the provisions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002), and any subsequent permit, as they relate to project construction activities.
- **Measure IS-1:** Development and implementation of a Weed Abatement Program/Non-Standard Special Provisions during construction.
- **Measure PS-1:** Compliance with the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan including planting of Coulter's matilija poppy and a minimum of 30 Southern California black walnut trees.

3.0 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.12, Paleontology, and 4.2.3.3, Paleontological Resources, in the Final EIR, the project would alter existing landforms and potentially expose fossil resources during grading and excavation. The grading and excavation for the project could impact paleontological resources in the following sediments: all types of Pleistocene alluvium, sedimentary rocks and sandstone of the Norco area, the Fernando Formation, Chino Hills Pliocene sediments, the Puente Formation, the Topanga Formation, the Sespe and Vaqueros Formations (interfingering), the Santiago Formation, the Silverado Formation, the Williams Formation, and the Ladd Formation.

3.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

3.3 Statement of Facts

The following measure included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project on paleontological resources, to below a level of significance:

- **Measure PAL-1:** Development and implementation of a project-specific Paleontological Mitigation Plan to address paleontological resources that may be encountered during construction, including field work, monitoring requirements and activities, laboratory methods, and curation.

4.0 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

4.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.11, Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography, and 4.2.3.4, Geology and Soils, in the Final EIR, the road, structures, slopes, and other features of the project could be impacted by

ground motion and liquefaction and possibly ground surface rupture during seismic events. The primary geologic and geotechnical constraints potentially affecting the project are:

- Moderate to high ground acceleration due to nearby active faults, including the Elsinore (Whittier segments), China-Central Avenue, Elsinore (Glen Ivy segments), Puente Hills Blind Thrust, and San Jacinto faults;
- Fault rupture associated with the Whittier and Chino-Central Avenue faults;
- Liquefaction and seismic compaction in areas of shallow groundwater and loose granular soils. Areas of high liquefaction potential or liquefaction hazard include the SR-91/I-15 interchange, I-15 north of the interchange in the vicinity of Corona Avenue and Hidden Valley Parkway, SR-91 east of the interchanges in the vicinity of McKinley Street, Buchanan Street, and Pierce Street, and the segment of SR-91 in Orange County between SR-241 and the Orange/Riverside County line;
- Slope stability in areas of ancient landslides, steep natural terrain, or cut slopes;
- Erosion and surficial instability on hillsides and in areas adjacent to the Santa Ana River floodplain;
- Non-rippable (i.e., difficult to excavate) granitic bedrock along SR-91 from I-15 to approximately Pierce Street;
- Possibly corrosive soils in areas along westbound SR-91 in the vicinity of the Orange/Riverside County line and along I-15; and
- A permanent subsurface easement in a designated National Natural Landmark (NNL) for subsurface tiebacks for the tieback wall along SR-91.

Grading and cut-and-fill for the project would alter existing landforms. Construction may also temporarily disturb soil outside the project footprint but within the freeway rights-of-way, primarily in the trample zone around work areas, heavy equipment traffic areas, and material laydown areas. Temporary impacts would include soil compaction and an increased possibility of soil erosion.

During construction of the project, excavated soil would be exposed, and there would be an increased potential for soil erosion compared to existing conditions. Additionally, during a storm event, soil erosion could occur at an accelerated rate.

If an earthquake occurs, the construction activities associated with the project could be impacted by ground motion from seismic activities, possible ground rupture, and liquefaction. Implementation of safe construction practices and compliance with Caltrans and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) requirements would minimize the impacts of these conditions.

The project may require blasting in areas underlain by non-rippable granitic bedrock, particularly in areas along SR-91 east of I-15.

4.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

4.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to geology and soils to below a level of significance:

- **Measure GEO-1:** Preparation of *Final Geotechnical Design Report* and implementation of the recommendations of that report during final design and construction.
- **Measure GEO-2:** Development and implementation of a quality assurance/quality control plan during construction.
- **Measure GEO-3:** Development and implementation of a blasting plan if blasting is determined to be required in areas of non-rippable bedrock.

5.0 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

5.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.13, Hazardous Waste/Materials, and 4.2.3.5, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, in the Final EIR, the following recognized environmental conditions could occur as a result of construction of the project:

- Potential soil and/or groundwater contamination at two hazardous waste/materials sites that would be used as a temporary construction easement (TCE) and/or a full or partial acquisition;
- Potential presence of hazardous wastes routinely stored or generated at multiple industrial and automotive facilities within the disturbance limits of the project;
- Asbestos in rails, bearing pads, support piers, expansion joint material in bridges, asphalt, and concrete and road building materials, and other building materials;
- Lead-based paint (LBP) on building and freeway structures and lead in yellow paint and tape used for pavement marking;
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in pole-mounted or pad-mounted transformers and/or light ballasts;
- Potential soil and/or groundwater contamination in soils adjacent to the railroad right-of-way;
- Relocation of the Southern California Edison (SCE) substation under Alternative 2 with design variations 2c, 2d, 2g, and 2h, but not under Alternative 1 and its design variations and Alternative 2 with design variations 2a, 2b, 2e, and 2f; and
- Creosote and pentachlorophenol in wooden utility poles, railroad ties, and other treated wooden objects.

5.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

5.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to hazards, hazardous materials, and hazardous wastes, to below a level of significance:

- **Measure HW-1:** Implementation of site-specific measures from the Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) for the Honda Cars of Corona and the Mobil No.18-FLM sites.
- **Measure HW-2:** Conduct site investigations for any new release sites within the project right-of-way prior to any ground disturbance activities.
- **Measure HW-3:** Conduct an aerially deposited lead study prior to any ground disturbance activities.
- **Measure HW-4:** Removal of asbestos-containing materials and LBP prior to demolition or removal of structures containing those types of materials.
- **Measure HW-5:** Conduct inspections for PCBs in utility pole-mounted transformers prior to disturbing or removing those poles.
- **Measure HW-6:** Test, remove, and properly dispose of any yellow traffic striping and pavement marking.
- **Measure HW-7:** Coordination with the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health prior to dewatering near contaminated soils or groundwater sites.
- **Measure HW-8:** Prior to any site disturbance, test soils adjacent to the Burlington, Northern, Santa Fe railroad tracks to determine whether soils in that area require special handling and disposal.
- **Measure HW-9:** Development and implementation of a site-specific Health and Safety Plan.
- **Measure HW-10:** Development and implementation of a soils and groundwater Contaminant Management Plan.
- **Measure HW-11:** Development and implementation of a Construction Contingency Plan.
- **Measure HW-12:** Notify Underground Service Alert two days prior to excavation.
- **Measure HW-13:** Submit fees to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) 10 days prior to the demolition or removal of any structures.
- **Measure HW-14:** Test and properly dispose of any treated wood waste and test soils surrounding railroad ties for wood treatments and preservatives.
- **Measure SC-4:** Conduct appropriate testing to determine if asbestos-containing materials are present.
- **Measure SC-5:** Proper removal and disposal of asbestos-containing materials if present.

6.0 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY, AND UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

6.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.9, Hydrology and Floodplains, and 4.2.3.6, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Utilities and Service Systems, in the Final EIR, existing runoff from SR-91 and I-15 in the study area is currently untreated. The project would result in a permanent increase of impervious surfaces and in runoff and pollutant loading (including sediments, trash, and debris) from the project segments of SR-91 and I-15. Compared with existing conditions, there would be a slight increase in runoff volumes due to the addition of new impervious areas from the freeway improvements under the project. Those increases would generally shorten the time of concentrations and runoff travel time to the Santa Ana River. However, because the flow increase to the Santa Ana River would be minimal, the hydrologic impact is considered negligible.

Pollutants of concern during operation of a transportation facility include sediments, trash, petroleum products, metals, nutrients, solvents, waste paint, herbicides, and pesticides. These pollutants of concern can be generated from maintenance activities as well as vehicles operating on the facility. New impervious areas associated with freeway facilities increase the volume of runoff during a storm, which more effectively transports pollutants to receiving waters and may lead to downstream erosion and impairment of water quality objectives and/or beneficial uses of receiving waters. There would be a net increase in impervious areas under the project that would result in an increase in the volume of runoff during a storm or a subsequent increase of pollutant loading (including petroleum products, metals, and chemicals) to receiving waters.

The construction of the project would also result in temporary effects to RWQCB jurisdictional areas; the RWQCB often asserts jurisdiction of these areas under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

Dewatering may be necessary to construct structure footings under the project. Dewatered groundwater may contain high levels of total dissolved solids, salinity, high nitrates, or other contaminants.

6.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

6.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to hydrology and water quality to below a level of significance:

- **Measure WQ-1:** Compliance with the provisions of the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002), and any subsequent permit as they relate to the project construction activities.
- **Measure WQ-2:** Compliance with the provisions of the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges to Surface Waters that Pose an Insignificant (De Minimus) Threat to Water

Quality, Order No. R8-2009-0003, NPDES No. CAG998001, as they relate to discharge of non-storm-water dewatering wastes for the project.

- **Measure WQ-3:** Provision of a copy of the discharge authorization letter issued by the RWQCB Executive Director to the design/build contractor.
- **Measure WQ-4:** Compliance with the procedures in the Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks, Project Planning and Design Guide (July 2010 or subsequent issuance) for implementing Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs for the project including coordination with the Santa Ana RWQCB; compliance with other provisions identified in the NPDES Permit, Statewide Storm Water Permit, and Waste Discharge Requirements for the State of California, Department of Transportation (Order No. 99-06-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003); compliance with other provisions identified in the NPDES Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the County of Riverside, and the incorporated cities of Riverside County within the Santa Ana Region (Order No. R8-2010-0033, NPDES No. CAS618033); and for the County of Orange, Orange County Flood Control District and the incorporated cities of Orange County within the Santa Ana Region (Order No. R8-2009-0030), as applicable.

7.0 LAND USE AND PLANNING, AND POPULATION AND HOUSING

7.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.1, Land Use, 3.4, Community Impacts, and 4.2.3.7, Land Use and Planning, and Population and Housing, in the Final EIR, the Initial Phase under the project would result in the acquisition and removal of 18 single-family and 118 multifamily homes. The Ultimate Project would result in the acquisition and removal of an additional 9 multifamily homes. As a result, the project would displace 507 residents.

Business parcel acquisitions under the project would displace 88 businesses in the City of Corona. The total employee displacements estimated for the project range from 169 to 576. Based on current market trends, the supply of potential replacement business sites in other areas would remain adequate. Although some businesses may temporarily close or relocate during a prolonged construction period, this impact would be localized and would not likely result in long-term changes in land use in the City of Corona. All the business displacement would occur in the City of Corona.

As discussed in Section 3.1, the project would result in permanent impacts to General Plan-designated land uses as a result of the acquisition of right-of-way and the change in land uses on that land to transportation uses. The Initial Phase of the project would result in the permanent use of 64.0 ac of land designated as Commercial, Industrial, Open Space/Recreation, Public Facilities, and Residential, and 125.4 ac of land designated as Transportation.

The Ultimate Project would result in the permanent use of a total of 78 ac of land designated Commercial, Industrial, Mixed-Use, Open Space/Recreation, Public Facilities, and Residential, and 226.1 ac of land designated as Transportation. The totals for the Ultimate Project include the acreage impacted by the Initial Phase described above. As a result, the project would also require the local jurisdictions to amend their General Plan Land Use Elements to reflect the incorporation of non-transportation-designated land into the SR-91 and I-15 facilities.

As discussed in Section 3.4, Community Impacts, construction of the project would temporarily affect the communities adjacent to the project segments of SR-91 and I-15. Temporary construction impacts could disrupt local traffic patterns and affect access to residences, businesses, and community facilities. These temporary impacts during construction would not change or alter community character and cohesion, or divide an existing community adjacent to the project segments of SR-91 and I-15.

Permanent impacts to community character and cohesion during the operation of the project would redistribute traffic flow that currently uses the local road system. As a result, some local residences may be exposed to less local road noise and traffic. On local streets affected by the project, sidewalks and crosswalks familiar to the residents would be modified and/or replaced with new sidewalks and crosswalks. Existing routes that are used to travel from one part of the community to another and are familiar to residents would be redesigned to accommodate associated project-related interchange and road improvements. Additionally, property acquisition would result in the relocation of residents, which would impact community character and cohesion. On local streets that cross SR-91 and I-15, the widened freeway cross sections would result in wider overcrossings and undercrossings, which would increase the lengths of the roads and sidewalks that are on the overcrossings or in the undercrossings. Therefore, the amount of time pedestrians and bicyclists spend on the overcrossings or in the undercrossings would increase compared to existing conditions. In addition, the segments of those roads under the existing overcrossings would experience a reduction in the amount of natural light, which could be perceived by pedestrians and bicyclists as adversely affecting their experience crossing under SR-91.

7.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

7.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to land use, population, and housing to below a level of significance:

- **Measure CI-1:** Continued design refinements during the design/build process to minimize full and partial acquisitions of property for the project.
- **Measure CI-2:** Compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 for all property acquisition.
- **Measure CI-3:** Reconfiguration of existing uses on remainder parcels to allow the affected use to continue to operate at that location to the extent consistent with applicable local codes and ordinances.
- **Measure LU-1:** Request local jurisdictions to amend their respective General Plans to modify land use designations for land incorporated in the SR-91 CIP.

The following additional measures, described elsewhere in these findings, would also partially address the project impacts related to land use, population, and housing:

- **Measure T-1:** Refer to Section 11.0, Transportation/Traffic, later in these findings.
- **Measure T-4:** Refer to Section 2.0, Aesthetics, earlier in these findings.
- **MeasureV-1:** Refer to Section 2.0, Aesthetics, earlier in these findings.

8.0 NOISE

8.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

Table 3.15.13 in Section 3.15, Noise, and Section 4.2.3.8, Noise, in the Final EIR show that receivers in the project area would experience a traffic noise level increase from future no project noise levels of up to 16 A-weighted decibels (dBA) under the project. A noise level increase of 3 dBA or more is perceptible by the average human ear in an outdoor environment, and a noise level increase of 12 dBA or more would be substantial. The increase in noise levels from future no project noise levels under the project for all receivers within the project area would be perceptible but not substantial, except for Receivers 23M, 127M, 20, 28M, 29M, 22, and 23. These receivers would experience a substantial noise increase under their respective alternatives and design options.

In Section 3.15, Tables 3.15.27 and 3.15.28 for the project show the recommended barriers for the SR-91 CIP.

8.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

8.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to long term noise; however, these measures would not reduce future with-project traffic noise levels to below future no project traffic noise levels and would not reduce with-project traffic noise levels to below a level of significance under CEQA. As a result, the project would result in unavoidable significant adverse long-term traffic noise impacts, even with implementation of Measures N-1, N-4, and N-5:

- **Measure N-1:** Include noise abatement determined to be reasonable and feasible in the final project design.
- **Measure N-4:** Construct noise barriers on I-15 within 5 years of completing the SR-91 CIP, if not already provided as part of a separate project.
- **Measure N-5:** Conduct interior noise analyses to determine if any residences qualify for consideration of unusual and extraordinary abatement.

9.0 PUBLIC SERVICES

9.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

9.1.1 Parks and Recreation Resources

As shown in Table 3.1.7 in Section 3.1, Land Use, and as discussed in Section 4.2.3.9 and Appendix B, Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f), in the Final EIR, the project would result in the permanent use of land in Chino Hills State Park (CHSP), permanent subsurface easements in CHSP and the New Orange County (OC) Park (NNL), and the temporary use of small land areas in CHSP, Featherly Regional Park, the Santa Ana River Trail/Bike Lane, Griffin Park, and El Cerrito Sports Park for TCEs, as follows:

- **CHSP:** The project would result in the permanent use of 0.48 ac of land from CHSP for two columns for the elevated westbound SR-91 off-ramp at Green River Road, an aerial easement for that off-ramp, and a small area south of the off-ramp. The project would also result in permanent subsurface easements at CHSP. The construction of the project would result in the temporary use of 2 ac in CHSP for TCEs.
- **Featherly Regional Park:** The project would not result in the permanent use of land from or permanent easements at this park but would result in the temporary use of 0.2 ac in the park for TCEs.
- **Griffin Park:** The project would not result in permanent use of land from or permanent easements at this park but would result in the temporary use of 0.5 ac in Griffin Park for a TCE.
- **Santa Ana River Trail/Bike Lane:** The project would result in temporary use and possible temporary closures of the Santa Ana River Trail/Bike Lane during project construction and would permanently relocate an approximately 200-foot-long segment of the Santa Ana River Trail/Bike Lane into the Green River Road right-of-way. Any trail closures would be temporary and alternate access would be provided during those closures.
- **New OC Park (NNL):** The project would not result in the permanent or temporary use of land from this park but would result in the use of two areas for permanent subsurface easements totaling 0.4 ac and 2.2 ac, respectively.
- **El Cerrito Sports Park:** The project would not result in the permanent use of land from or permanent easements at this park but would result in the temporary use of 0.19 ac of land in this park for TCEs.

9.1.2 Utilities

As described in Section 3.5, Utilities/Emergency Services, in the Final EIR, the project would impact existing utility facilities during construction that could result in removal, protection in place, or relocation of the affected utility facilities.

9.2 Findings

9.2.1 Parks and Recreation Resources

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

9.2.2 Utilities

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

9.3 Statement of Facts

9.3.1 Parks and Recreation Resources

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project on parks and recreation resources to below a level of significance:

- **Measure PR-1:** Contribution of \$100,000 planning and improvements in the area around the CHSP trailhead at Prado Road.
- **Measure PR-2:** Incorporation of aesthetic features on the retaining wall on westbound SR-91 facing CHSP consistent with Measure V-1 (refer to Section 2.1, Aesthetics, for discussion regarding Measure V-1).
- **Measure PR-3:** Limiting construction near CHSP to daylight hours unless evening or night construction is necessary for operational reasons, and closing of gates at Coal Canyon at all times except to provide access for construction employees, materials delivery, equipment, and waste removal.
- **Other Commitments by RCTC:** A stand-alone project to provide barriers on the north and south sides of SR-91 adjacent to CHSP during implementation of the Ultimate Project.

Additional measures included in the Final EIR that would benefit CHSP are:

- **Measure UES-4:** Provision of a 30- to 36-inch-high barrier on eastbound and westbound SR-91 between Green River Road and SR-241.
- **Measure NC-4:** Refer to Section 3.0, Biological Resources, earlier in these findings.
- **Measure AS-8:** Installation and maintenance of silt fences at Coal Canyon and areas in CHSP to keep animals from entering construction areas.

9.3.2 Utilities

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project on utilities to below a level of significance:

- **Measure UES-1:** Preparation and implementation of utility relocation plans in coordination with the utility providers/owners.
- **Measure UES-2:** Coordination of temporary ramp and lane closures and detour plans with emergency services providers as part of the *Final Transportation Management Plan* and the *Final Ramp Closure Plan* (refer to Measures T-1 and T-2 in Section 11.0, Transportation/Traffic, below).
- **Measure UES-3:** Minimize the risk of fires during construction by coordinating with local fire departments on defensible spaces, appropriate firefighting equipment to be kept on site,

prohibitions on the use of equipment that could throw off sparks, and posting of emergency numbers in all active construction areas.

10.0 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

10.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in Sections 3.6, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, and 4.2.3.10, Transportation/Traffic, in the Final EIR, construction of the project would result in short-term adverse traffic impacts including temporary lane closures, detours, and ramp closures that may impair the ability of law enforcement, fire, and other emergency service providers to meet response time goals.

10.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

10.3 Statement of Facts

The following measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential short-term adverse effects of the project related to transportation to below a level of significance:

- **Measure T-1:** Development and implementation of the *Final Transportation Management Plan*.
- **Measure T-2:** Development and implementation of the *Final Ramp Closure Plan*.

11.0 MANDATORY FINDINGS

The discussion in this section provides mandatory findings as required in Section 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines.

11.1 Wildlife and History

11.1.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in detail in the Final EIR, the project-related adverse impacts to cultural, paleontological, and biological resources can be mitigated to below a level of significance based on implementation of the measures identified in the Final EIR for the project, with the exception of the permanent loss of 0.02 ac of oak woodland.

11.1.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

11.1.3 Statement of Facts

Compensatory mitigation as described in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to oak woodlands but not to below a level of significance. The

compensatory mitigation for effects to oak trees (excluding California scrub oaks) with trunk sizes above 8 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) will involve replacement at a mitigation-to-effect ratio of 3:1, if feasible. Heritage oaks (oaks with a greater than 36-inch dbh) will be replaced at a mitigation-to-effect ratio of 10:1, if feasible. If the replacement trees cannot be planted in the immediate vicinity of where the previous trees were located, they may be planted elsewhere in the project area, subject to approval by the Caltrans Landscape Architect and the affected local jurisdiction, if any.

11.2 Cumulative Effects

11.2.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As discussed in detail in Section 3.25, Cumulative Impacts, in the Final EIR, the project may result in adverse impacts to the following that are not mitigated or offset to below a level of significance under CEQA, and that were determined to potentially contribute to cumulative adverse impacts:

- Human Environment
 - Farmlands
 - Community Character and Cohesion, and Property Acquisition
 - Traffic – Construction
 - Visual and Aesthetic Resources
- Physical Environment
 - Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff
 - Paleontology
 - Air Quality – Construction
 - Noise – Operations
- Biological Environment
 - Natural Communities, Plant Species, and Animal Species
 - Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States
 - Threatened and Endangered Species
 - Invasive Species

11.2.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

11.2.3 Statement of Facts

Extensive measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to the human, physical, and biological environments. However, those measures are not sufficient to reduce the potential contribution of the project to cumulative impacts related to those environmental parameters to below a level of significance under CEQA.

11.3 Adverse Effects on Human Beings

11.3.1 Adverse Environmental Effect

As described above and as discussed in detail in Section 3.25 in the Final EIR, the effects of the project, when combined with the effects of other cumulative projects, would potentially contribute to cumulative impacts for several environmental parameters listed earlier. As a result, the project also has the potential to result in substantial adverse effects on human beings, particularly as a result of the significant unavoidable impacts described earlier. While not specifically affecting humans, those impacts would change the environment, which could be perceived by some humans as a substantial adverse impact on humans.

11.3.2 Finding

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR.

11.3.3 Statement of Facts

As described earlier, extensive measures included in the Final EIR would substantially reduce the potential adverse effects of the project related to the human, physical, and biological environments. However, those measures are not sufficient to reduce the potential contribution of the project to cumulative impacts related to those environmental parameters to below a level of significance under CEQA.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE
STATE ROUTE 91 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15903) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

1.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects of the project, the adverse environmental effects may be considered acceptable. When the Lead Agency approves a project which will result in the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the Final EIR but are not avoided or substantially lessened, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the Final EIR and/or other information in the record.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as the Lead Agency under CEQA for the State Route 91 Corridor Improvement Project (SR-91 CIP), has prepared this Statement of Overriding Considerations which describes the unavoidable significant adverse impacts of the SR-91 CIP after mitigation and the reasons why those impacts are acceptable based on the benefits that would occur under the project.

2.1 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF THE SR-91 CIP

As described in Chapter 4, California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation, in the Final EIR for the SR-91 CIP, the project will result in the following significant adverse impacts which cannot be avoided or reduced to below a level of significance under CEQA:

- Long-term traffic related noise
- Permanent impacts to 0.02 acre (ac) of oak woodland habitat
- Cumulative impacts related to the human environment (farmlands; community character and cohesion, and property acquisition; traffic during construction; and visual and aesthetic resources), the physical environment (water quality and storm water runoff, air quality during construction, and noise during operations), and the biological environment (natural communities, plant species, and animal species; wetlands and other waters of the United States; threatened and endangered species; and invasive species)

- Adverse effects on human beings as a result of the cumulative impacts on the human, physical, and biological environments described above.

Although extensive measures addressing the effects of the project on the environment are provided in the Final EIR, those measures are not sufficient to avoid or reduce the project effects described above to below a level of significance under CEQA.

3.1 OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS THAT SUPPORT APPROVAL OF THE PROJECT

SR-91 is currently used by more than 280,000 vehicles per day (vpd) at the Orange/Riverside County line, and this volume continues to grow. At the same time, travel speeds on SR-91 are well below 30 miles per hour (mph) during the lengthy morning (westbound) and evening (eastbound) peak travel periods in this corridor. Existing congestion and delays on SR-91 and Interstate 15 (I-15) during peak travel periods result in freeway traffic diverting to adjacent local roads to avoid congestion and delays. This diversion of freeway traffic is particularly prevalent in the City of Corona as motorists on westbound SR-91 and motorists transitioning from northbound I-15 to westbound SR-91 seek less congested routes in the morning (westbound) peak travel period. Similarly, diversion of freeway traffic into the City occurs as motorists on eastbound SR-91 and motorists transitioning from eastbound SR-91 to southbound I-15 seek less congested routes in the evening (eastbound) peak travel period.

SR-91 is continuing to experience increased congestion as a result of population growth in Riverside County and the increase in jobs in Orange County. Based on demographic projections for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region (Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Riverside Counties), the number of vehicles on SR-91 is expected to increase by approximately 50 percent by 2035, which would result in continuing congestion and delays on SR-91. Those projections show that population and employment in Riverside and Orange Counties are also forecast to increase substantially by 2035. The existing travel demand on SR-91 has led to a heavy directional commute pattern between Riverside and Orange/Los Angeles Counties that is projected to continue into the future.

As a result, improvements are necessary to address existing and projected deficiencies regarding mobility, access, goods movement, and freeway capacity on the project segment of SR-91, which is the only major highway that links Riverside and Orange Counties. The SR-91 CIP is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Improve the vehicle, person, and goods movement within the SR-91 corridor to more effectively serve existing and future travel demand between and within Riverside and Orange Counties.
2. Provide improvements along the SR-91 and I-15 transportation corridors as well as to related local roads, and to reduce diversion of regional traffic from the freeways into the surrounding communities.

Caltrans has identified the following benefits of the project compared to the No Build Alternative which meet the project objectives, and which override the unavoidable significant adverse environmental impacts of the project:

- Improved travel times and speeds compared to the No Build Alternative
- Improved safety compared to the No Build Alternative
- Correction of existing roadway operational deficiencies compared to the No Build Alternative
- Support of existing, approved, and planned land uses compared to the No Build Alternative

- Improved system linkages and regional goods movement compared to the No Build Alternative
- Air quality improvements compared to the No Build Alternative

These benefits of the SR-91 CIP are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.2 TRAVEL TIMES AND SPEEDS

The a.m. peak hour direction of travel is on westbound SR-91. The p.m. peak hour direction of travel is eastbound on SR-91. Table 1.13 in the Final EIR summarizes travel times and speeds on SR-91 between SR-241 and I-15 for the Baseline/Existing (2007) condition, and for 2015 and 2035 with the No Build and Build Alternatives based on the peak directions and hours of travel (i.e., westbound in the a.m. peak hour and eastbound in the p.m. peak hour). That analysis shows that under the No Build Alternative in both the a.m. and p.m. peak hours, travel times on SR-91 will increase substantially and travel speeds will decrease substantially by 2015 and 2035 compared to the Baseline/Existing (2007) condition. Under the project in the a.m. and p.m. peak hours, travel times on SR-91 will also increase by 2015 and 2035 compared to the Baseline/Existing (2007) condition, but those increases will be substantially less than the increases that would occur under the No Build Alternative. In addition, under the project in the a.m. and p.m. peak hours, travel speeds on SR-91 will also decrease by 2015 and 2035 compared to the Baseline/Existing (2007) condition, but those decreases will be much less than the decreases that would occur under the No Build Alternative. In addition, as a result of the additional lane provided in each direction by the project, increases in travel times and the decreases in travel speeds are generally less under the project than under the No Build Alternative.

In summary, the SR-91 CIP would result in benefits to the traveling public as a result on better travel times and speeds compared to the No Build Alternative in both 2015 and 2035.

3.3 SAFETY

Accident data for the project segments on SR-91 and I-15 were reviewed. Those data are summarized in Table 1.14 in the Final EIR for accident rates on the mainline freeways, on freeway-to-freeway connector ramps, and on SR-91 and I-15 local road interchange ramps. The actual accident rate on the eastbound SR-91 mainline is higher than the statewide average. The Caltrans District 8 2004–2007 Traffic Accident and Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) data provided in the *Traffic Study Report* (July 2010) indicate that the predominant types of these accidents are rear-end and sideswipe crashes, which account for approximately 50 percent and 25 percent of all accident types, respectively. Components and features included in the SR-91 CIP that will improve overall corridor safety and potentially reduce accidents are:

- The accident rate on the southbound State Route 71 (SR-71) to westbound SR-91 connector is more than twice the statewide average for highway connectors. This connector would be improved under the SR-91 CIP because the SR-71/SR-91 system interchange would be modified to accommodate the project improvements on SR-91.
- The accident rate on the northbound I-15 to SR-91 westbound and eastbound connectors is more than four times the statewide average. These connectors would be improved under the SR-91 CIP. The collector-distributor facility in the westbound direction on SR-91 between I-15 and Main Street in the project is expected to reduce congestion and related accidents on these connectors.
- The fatality rate on the westbound SR-91 to northbound I-15 connector is above the statewide average, likely due to weaving constraints from the Main Street ramps. Braiding the ramps at Main Street as part of the SR-91 CIP is expected to improve safety on this segment of the freeway because

those existing weaves would be eliminated (a weave is where traffic entering the freeway conflicts with traffic exiting the freeway) and a longer separation of connector and mainline traffic would be provided.

- Of the 60 ramps in the project study area, 20 currently experience accident rates higher than the statewide average. In addition, some interchange ramps have fatality rates above the statewide average. The SR-91 CIP includes local interchange improvements at nearly all the interchange ramps on the project segment of SR-91. These improvements are forecast to improve operations, efficiency, and safety on the project segment of SR-91. The enhanced ramp capacity (extended ramps to ensure sufficient stopping distance for off-ramps and adequate storage at ramp meters for on-ramps) and improved interchange geometrics provided under the project are expected to improve safety and potentially reduce accidents associated with the local interchange ramps on SR-91. Two ramp braids (a braid is where on- and off-ramps are grade separated so that there is not a merging conflict between vehicles entering and exiting the freeway) are included in the project, at the SR-91 eastbound ramp braids between Auto Center Drive and Maple Street, and the eastbound Main Street on-ramp to SR-91 under the I-15 corridor connectors. These ramp braids will eliminate short weaves and reduce the potential for sideswipe accidents.

In summary, the SR-91 CIP includes project components and features that would improve the operational safety on the project segments of SR-91 and I-15 compared to the No Build Alternative.

3.4 EXISTING ROADWAY OPERATIONAL DEFICIENCIES

The alignment of SR-91 passes through Santa Ana Canyon immediately south of the Santa Ana River. The topography of the canyon is a constraint to the two existing major transportation corridors that run through it: SR-91 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line. As a result, nearly all surface and rail traffic between Riverside and Orange Counties is funneled into this single narrow corridor, which has limited physical opportunities for expansion as a result of the substantial slopes on the north and south sides of the narrow canyon and the Santa Ana River in the canyon bottom. The topography of the canyon also limits opportunities for arterial road connections to SR-91 between approximately State Route 241 (SR-241) and SR-71.

Specific structural and other limitations on the project segment of SR-91 anticipated to be improved by the SR-91 CIP are discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.4.1 Freeway Geometry

The existing general-purpose (GP) lanes on the project segment of SR-91 were constructed beginning in 1959 as a four-lane divided facility at a lower design speed than current standards. Two additional GP lanes (one in each direction) were completed in 1974. The high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes completed in 1993 were designed to fit within the existing roadway width. Other freeway improvements in the SR-91 corridor study area include the construction of SR-241 in the late 1990s, the addition of toll lanes on SR-91 in Orange County in the early 1990s, the SR-91 Eastbound Lane Addition which opened for operation in 2011, and the construction of I-15 on the west end of the SR-91 corridor study area.

Two primary considerations have resulted in a facility that does not meet current freeway geometric standards: (1) the design and construction of the original SR-91 facility at a lower design speed than the current design speed standard, and (2) construction of the existing HOV lanes within the limited right-of-way available at that time. The existing nonstandard geometric features along the project segment of SR-91 include sight distances, design speed, weaving distances, deceleration distances, grades of local

roads at ramp connections, horizontal clearances, HOV preferred lane (on-ramp), interchange spacing, intersection spacing, lane widths, the lengths of single-lane branch connectors, outer separations, ramp gore geometry, shoulder widths, side slope steepness, standards for curvature, and superelevation rates, transitions, and runoff. Under the SR-91 CIP, the freeway will be designed to current standards which will improve many of existing geometric features on the project segment of SR-91 which do not meet current standards.

3.4.2 Pavement

Sections of the SR-91 embankment through the City of Corona have historically experienced substantial localized settlement resulting in areas of uneven pavement surfaces on SR-91. Based on the latest pavement condition survey, the predominant pavement distresses observed in the jointed plain concrete pavement were faulting at the pavement panel joints, which results in poor ride quality. This has resulted in above-average maintenance efforts to maintain the structural integrity of the pavement and the ride quality. Although there are indications that those maintenance efforts have proven adequate to stabilize the situation, evidence to date is inconclusive, and potential settlement remains a continuing concern that would be considered during the design of the project. Evaluation of the existing pavement condition would be conducted along the entire project segment of SR-91 as part of the SR-91 CIP, including localized problem areas.

3.4.3 Drainage

The majority of the existing drainage system for SR-91 was constructed in the 1960s, and in certain locations the system is reaching the end of its expected 50-year service life. Although specific deficiencies in the existing drainage system have not been identified, the structural integrity of the system will be assessed during the design of the project. Needed improvements would be identified and implemented by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and/or Caltrans during the design/build phase of the project. Many of the existing drainage structures would be extended by the project to accommodate the widened freeway cross section.

3.4.4 Structures

The McKinley Street undercrossing of SR-91 is designated Functionally Obsolete in a bridge inspection report because of the nonstandard 14.75-foot (ft) vertical clearance at the north edge of the bridge over the local street below. Under the SR-91 CIP, the westbound widening would be on a new, higher off-ramp structure that meets the minimal vertical clearance standard of 15 ft. Similarly, the Temescal Wash bridge and overhead are designated Structurally Deficient as a result of the deck condition on that structure. Because the deck was sealed with methacrylate in 2009, which corrected/improved the deck condition, the Structurally Deficient designation would likely be removed from the new bridge inspection report for this structure.

Several structures have also been identified for seismic retrofit as part of the project. The bridge structure work for the project includes construction of new structures and replacement, widening, and retrofitting of existing structures.

3.5 SOCIAL DEMANDS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There is substantial existing development along the project segments of SR-91 and I-15. Those existing land uses, which contribute to the traffic demand in this corridor, include residential, commercial, industrial, public, and institutional uses in the cities along the corridor (Anaheim, Yorba Linda, Corona, Riverside, and Norco) and in unincorporated areas in Orange and Riverside Counties. While these areas are largely built out or are protected open space, such as Featherly Regional Park, CHSP, and the New Orange County Park (National Natural Landmark) (New OC Park [NNL]), additional development is approved and planned in other areas along the alignments of SR-91 and I-15. That approved and proposed development is based on these cities' and counties' adopted General Plans and a number of adopted Specific Plans. This future development would contribute to demand in the SR-91 corridor for work as well as other trips between Riverside and Orange Counties. The project would provide additional capacity on the project segment of SR-91 that would support existing development as well as approved and planned future development in the Cities of Anaheim, Yorba Linda, Corona, Riverside, and Norco, and unincorporated Orange and Riverside Counties.

3.6 MODAL INTERRELATIONSHIP AND SYSTEM LINKAGES

The existing public transit linkages between Riverside and Orange Counties are bus and commuter rail. Metrolink commuter rail services between Riverside and Orange Counties operate on railroad tracks owned by BNSF. Currently, express bus service operating on SR-91 provides connections from Riverside County to employment centers in Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Fullerton, and Irvine in Orange County. Additional express bus routes planned for 2016 would originate in the Riverside and Temecula areas with destinations to employment centers in Anaheim and Orange in Orange County. Although the SR-91 CIP does not include specific transit improvements, buses and carpools will be able to use the HOV/tolled express lanes. In addition, improvements in the SR-91 corridor under the project will support corridor system linkages and regional goods movement as described in the following sections.

3.6.1 Corridor System Linkages

The SR-91 corridor is an integral component of the regional transportation system because it provides a key link between the Inland Empire and Orange County and a gateway into southern Los Angeles County. The corridor connects an area with a large residential population to substantial employment opportunities in Orange and Los Angeles Counties. As a result of topography, there are few viable transportation alternatives between Riverside and Orange Counties. The SR-91 CIP will provide enhanced mobility between the Riverside and Orange Counties as well as additional connectivity between I-15 and SR-91 with the direct connectors for the HOV/tolled express lanes.

3.6.2 Regional Goods Movement

Regional goods movement is concerned with the movement of all types of goods and materials across and through southern California. Specifically, SCAG has identified goods movement as a critical component of transportation system planning in southern California. The *Southern California Strategy for Goods Movement: A Plan for Action* (SCAG, March 2005) identified the existing and projected volumes of goods being transported through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. That plan also identified strategies to address the movement of these goods from these ports to their eventual destinations in the United States via rail and surface transportation facilities. According to the plan, over one-third of waterborne freight container traffic at United States' ports is handled by the Ports of Los Angeles and

Long Beach, with 50 to 60 percent of this freight transported to destinations outside southern California via rail or truck.

The key component to addressing regional goods movement in southern California is providing appropriate infrastructure and facilities to support the ship, rail, and surface transportation movement of goods. SR-91, as a major east-west freeway, provides critical connections between trucks coming from/going to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and destinations across southern California and points to the east, with truck trips at approximately 6.7 percent of the total daily traffic volumes in 2007. As a result, it is important for regional goods movement that freeways in southern California, including SR-91, provide adequate capacity to accommodate goods movement truck traffic in the region in the future.

In addition to high volumes of goods being shipped to/from the two ports, goods movement truck traffic is also generated at rail/truck transfer yards at several locations in southern California and in the general area around the March Air Reserve Base. Specifically, land planning and economic projections indicate that the Perris/Moreno Valley/March Air Reserve Base area will serve as a major distribution hub for goods in the Inland Empire. This distribution/employment center will result in increased travel demand by trucks carrying goods through the project area, including on SR-91.

In summary, SR-91 is an existing key freeway corridor supporting major volumes of goods movement by truck in southern California. As goods movement needs continue to grow, the volumes of trucks to/from the ports, the March Air Reserve Base area, and rail/truck transfer yards are expected to increase. Much of that traffic will use SR-91 for at least parts of each trip in the region.

3.7 AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

As described in detail in the Final EIR, the project includes tolled express lanes. Most of the ramps on the project segments of SR-91 and I-15 are already metered, and those ramp meters would be retained in the project. These project features would contribute to air quality emissions reductions in the long term.

Although the SR-91 CIP does not include any specific transit-related improvements, the HOV/tolled express lanes and the ramp metering would directly benefit transit vehicles and carpools and their passengers traveling on the project segments of SR-91 and I-15. Specifically, RCTC and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) currently offer rideshare and transit services and programs, including commuter and local bus services; commuter rail services; and assistance in forming, joining, and managing carpools and vanpools. Commuter assistance or programs to reduce the number of drive-alone travelers in Riverside County is a mandated part of RCTC's Measure A program. The carpool, vanpool, and bus services in the SR-91 corridor would benefit from the time savings as a result of using the preferential lanes (HOV/tolled express lanes) provided by the project.

RCTC has been coordinating with the Riverside Transit Agency on enhanced express bus service for the SR-91 corridor. The addition of tolled express lanes on SR-91 under the project provides the opportunity to nearly double the amount of express bus service that is currently offered in this corridor (to a total of 41 trips per day). While this service is not a specific component of the SR-91 CIP, it is an important element of RCTC's plan for improved mobility in the corridor. The express bus service would benefit from the SR-91 CIP because, without the project, future congestion in the corridor would be severe and express bus service would not be viable.

In summary, although the project does not include specific transit, transportation systems management (TSM), or transportation demand management (TDM) components, the SR-91 CIP is supportive of the various shared-ride modes currently offered by RCTC and OCTA.

4.1 CONCLUSION

Caltrans concludes, based upon the whole of the record, that the economic, social, and environmental benefits of improved mobility and reduced travel times of the SR-91 CIP outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts associated with its construction and operation, and determines that said benefits override the significance of its associated adverse impacts.

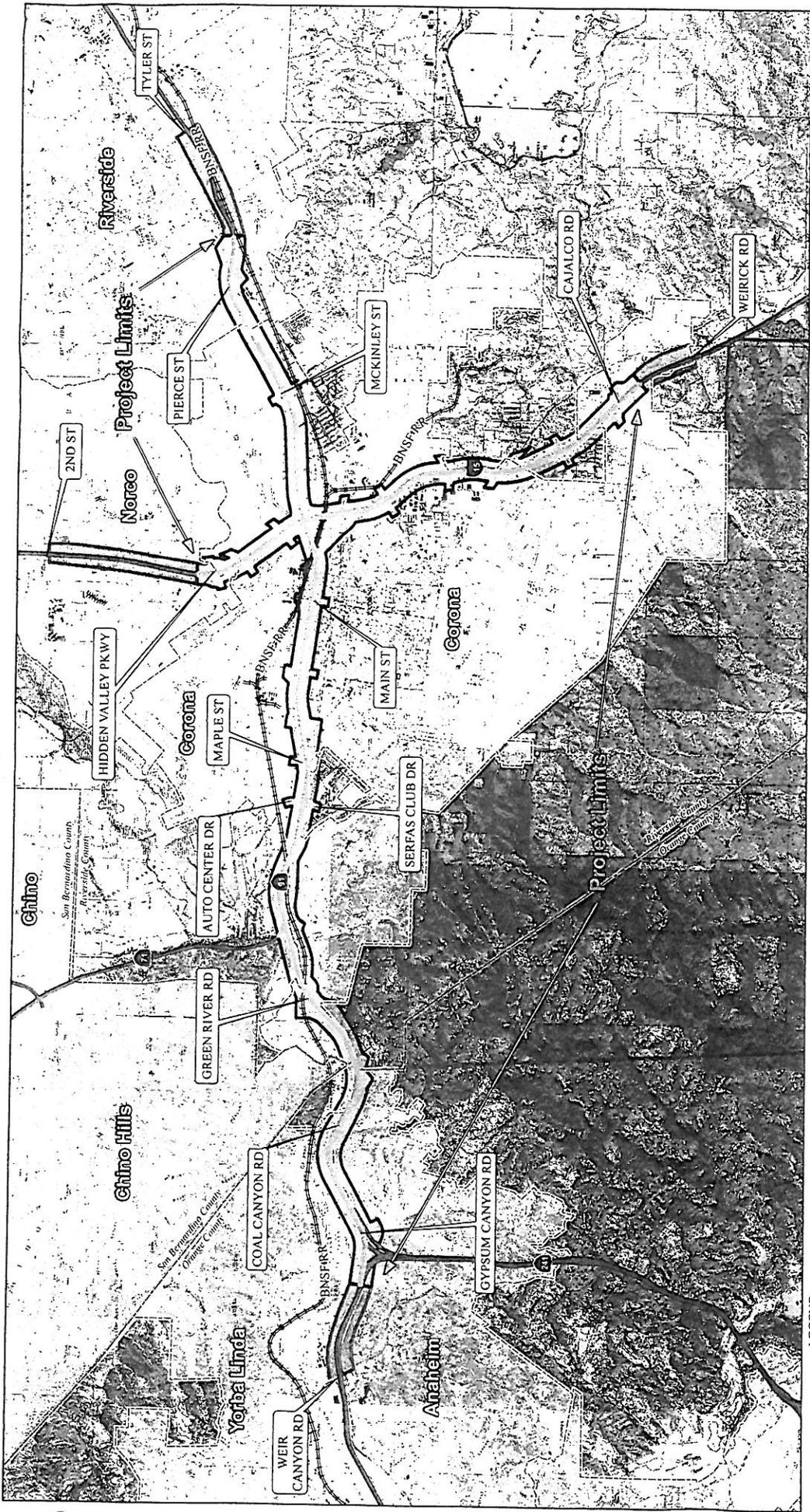


FIGURE 2-1

SR-91 Corridor Improvement Project
 Project Location on SR-91 and I-15

On: 9/14/18 9:18 AM
 Rev: 15/18 00013 04
 EA: 05/10

LEGEND

- Project Limits (the construction limits for the Alternative 1 and 2 improvements, excluding the Advanced Signage Areas)
- Advanced Signage Area (part of project; signing installation in the freeway right-of-way only, and no other project construction)
- SR-91 Study Area for the Build Alternatives
- City Boundaries
- County Boundaries

0 0.625 1.25 Miles

SOURCE USGS 7.5 QUAD - BLACK STAR CANYON (88), CORONA NORTH (81), CORONA SOUTH (88), PRADO DAM (81), RIVERSIDE WEST (81), CALIF
 I:\PA\20701\GIS\Bases\SR91_115_Project\Alignments.mxd (4/11/2011)