

## Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: December 11-12, 2013

Reference No.: 2.3b.  
Action item

  
From: STEVEN KECK  
Acting Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Timothy Craggs  
Chief  
Division of Design

Subject: NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 6-FRE-99 PM 29.5  
RESOLUTION S-758

### RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached resolution S-758 and map authorizing a new public road connection at Veterans Boulevard to State Route (SR) 99, in the city of Fresno, in Fresno County.

### ISSUE:

The City of Fresno has requested approval of a new public road connection to SR 99. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway or controlled access highway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of a new public road connection as an interchange to SR 99 in the county of Fresno, City of Fresno, at postmile 29.5.

Recommended by   
KARLA SUTLIFF  
Chief Engineer

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Fresno proposes to construct a new interchange on State Route 99 (SR 99) at Veterans Boulevard just north of the Shaw Avenue Interchange in the northwestern area of the city of Fresno. Veterans Boulevard would provide a southwest to northeast diagonal connection between Shaw Avenue and Herndon Avenue. The project is needed to provide improved access and circulation in the area between the adjacent interchanges and across SR 99. This project will also support current and planned urban development within the northwestern area of the city of Fresno, in central Fresno County.

SR 99 became part of the State Highway System (SHS) in 1909 and the California Freeway and Expressway System in 1959. A major route in the most productive agricultural region in the world, SR 99 is critical to the economic vitality of the State. SR 99 is heavily used by interregional travelers, commuters, recreational travelers, and goods movement, with the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) ranging from 30,000 to 109,000, with trucks constituting up to 29 percent of the AADT. SR 99 is the principal north/south freeway in the Central Valley. Within District 6, SR 99 traverses through the counties of Kern, Tulare, Fresno and Madera and through the urban centers of Bakersfield, Tulare, Visalia, Fresno and Madera.

Through District 6, SR 99 is a “High Emphasis Route” and “Focus Route” on the 1989 established Interregional Road System; is on the National Highway System; is on the National Network for State Transportation Assistance Act; is identified as an Intermodal Corridor of Economic Significance; and is a “Priority Global Gateway” for goods movement in the Global Gateways Development Program. SR 99 is functionally classified as a Principal Arterial for its entire length and is on the Strategic Highway Corridor Network under the Federal-aid Surface Transportation Program.

Within the project limits, SR 99 is a six-lane freeway with 10-foot outside and inside shoulders. North of the proposed connection there is a split interchange at Grantland Avenue and Herndon Avenue. South of the proposed connection, access to SR 99 is provided at the Shaw Avenue Interchange.

The proposed project will construct Veterans Boulevard, a southwest to northeast diagonal arterial, from Shaw Avenue to Herndon Avenue/Poke Avenue and the new interchange at SR 99. The project also includes a grade separation at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks and at the new California High Speed Rail (CAHSR) tracks.

The 2025 City of Fresno General Plan classifies Veterans Boulevard as a six-lane arterial. Land use on the west side of SR 99 is residential and on the east side of SR 99 is mix of commercial, industrial, and residential. The Council of Fresno County Governments “2007 Regional Transportation Plan” (RTP) identifies Veterans Boulevard as a proposed future route in the County’s Regionally Significant Road System. The RTP defines Veterans Boulevard from Ashlan Avenue to Herndon Avenue as a new six-lane divided super arterial. The RTP also identifies Veterans Boulevard from Herndon Avenue to Grantland Avenue (including the

proposed project) as included in the Measure “C” Extension Expenditure Plan, Regional Transportation Funding Program.

The interchange and associated improvements address both current and future traffic demands in the region. The construction of a new interchange at Veterans Boulevard will improve the operations of the adjacent interchanges and arterial roads by providing existing traffic a new point of direct access to Route 99. Furthermore, traffic operations at the neighboring arterial intersections are expected to significantly improve. Veterans Boulevard was previously known as the Grantland Diagonal and has been part of the City of Fresno’s General Plan since 1984.

Traffic studies were performed for this project and did not indicate any other measures needed to be considered for SR 99 based on this new connection. The interchange should operate at an acceptable level of service through 2035.

The current construction cost is \$87,080,000 and the Right-of-Way acquisition cost is \$28,259,000. The project is anticipated to be funded through a combination of local and federal funding sources including: Measure C sales tax funds, development impact fees, and Federal Demonstration Funds. The CAHSR will fund and construct the Veterans Boulevard crossing over the CAHSR and UPRR tracks in 2014-2015.

The City of Fresno prepared the Project Study Report in 2009. A public hearing was held on August 29, 2012. The Project Report was approved on July 1, 2013.

The Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (FEIR/EA) with Finding of No Significant Impact was prepared in accordance with Caltrans' environmental procedures, as well as State and Federal environmental regulations for the Veterans Boulevard Interchange Project. This report was signed on June 7, 2013. Concurrent with this agenda item the FEIR/EA with Finding of No Significant Impact is being considered under Item 2.2c.(3) on this month’s agenda.

A Freeway Agreement with the City of Fresno was signed on October 3, 2013. A Freeway Agreement with the County of Fresno was signed on October 8, 2013. These agreements will be executed by the Department after Commission approval of the new public road connection.

Attachments:

Resolution S-758  
Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection**

**6-Fre-99 PM 29.5**

**Resolution S-758**

**WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation and City of Fresno jointly request approval of new public road connection on State Route 99 for Veterans Boulevard; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Fresno per Resolution of the Council of the City of Fresno, Resolution No. 2013-176, has committed to the funding and delivery of the new connection within 10 years of the California Transportation Commission's approval of this new public road connection; and

**WHEREAS**, the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact was approved on June 7, 2013, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the project report was approved on July 1, 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, the project will have impacts on the environment that will be mitigated.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize a new public road connection on State Route 99 at Veterans Boulevard at PM 29.5, in the city of Fresno, in Fresno County.

