State of California
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

California State Transportation Agency

M e m o r a n d u m

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISION

CTC Meeting: December 10, 2014

Reference No.: 2.2c.(2)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

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Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING**
05-SB-101, PM 1.4/12.3
RESOLUTION E-14-61

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-14-61.

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:

- Interstate 101 (I-101) in Santa Barbara County. Add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to a portion of I-101 in the city of Santa Barbara. (PPNO 7101)

This project in Santa Barbara County will construct HOV lanes on a portion of I-101. The project is not fully funded. The project is programmed in the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program. The total estimated cost is $467,900,000 for capital and support. Depending on the availability of funds, construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2018-19. The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope programmed by the Commission in the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources that may be impacted by the project include: aesthetics, community impacts, noise, geology and soils, water quality, biological resources, and traffic.

Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance through proposed mitigation measures with the exception of aesthetics, causing a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be prepared for the project. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
05-SB-101, PM 1.4/12.3
Resolution E-14-61

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:

- Interstate 101 (I-101) in Santa Barbara County. Add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to a portion of I-101 in the city of Santa Barbara. (PPNO 7101)

1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that a 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.

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 support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.

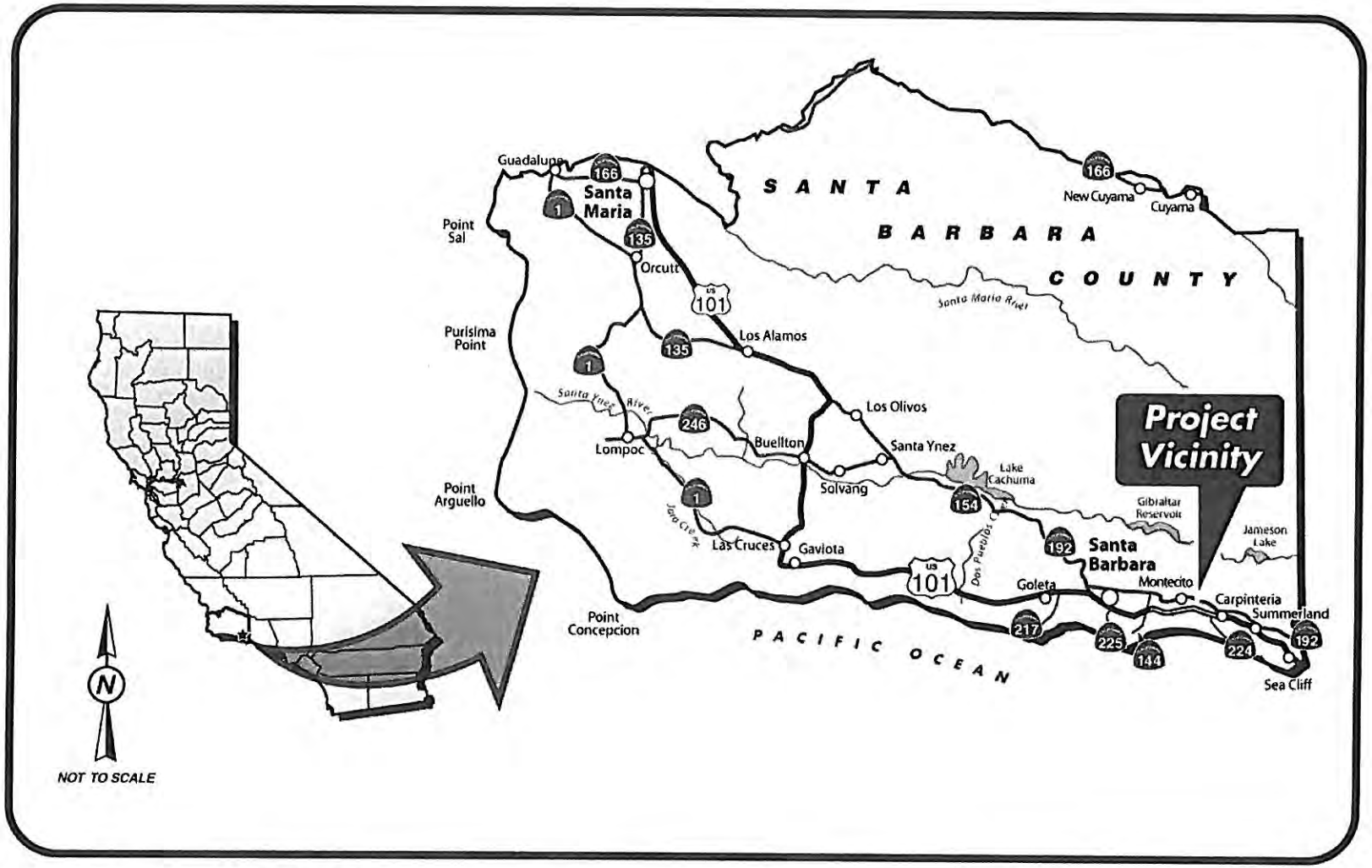

Figure 1-4 Project Vicinity Map

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDING AN HOV LANE ON BOTH SIDES OF U.S. 101 FROM CARPINTERIA CREEK IN THE CITY OF CARPINTERIA TO CABRILLO BOULEVARD IN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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 (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following impacts have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

- Aesthetics/Visual impacts resulting from the individual project and cumulatively with past and future projects: Substantial visual changes would occur throughout this ten-mile corridor due to the loss of vegetation, increased paving, and construction of recommended soundwalls. There are several major projects that were either recently constructed, currently being constructed, or planned for construction that will all contribute to an increase in the visual scale of the highway corridor and its urban character. Although each of these project would individually minimize and/or mitigate visual impacts, the cumulative visual effect of those projects combined with the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes project would be substantial.

Overriding considerations that support approval of this recommended project are as follows:

The project would reduce congestion and delay; provide capacity for future travel demand; improve travel time on U.S. 101 within the project limits; provide for high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane continuity on U.S. 101 in southern Santa Barbara County (as planned in the updated 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy), and the project would encourage a modal shift to transit and carpooling.

Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative based on the fact that it was originally developed to maximize opportunities for retaining and enhancing high-value resources including scenic views, wetlands, and median/outside landscaping.

Additionally, the F Modified configuration was selected for the Cabrillo Boulevard/Hot Springs Road interchange because it would best address traffic circulation and safety in the project limits as well as satisfy the needs of motorists and residents in the vicinity.

Population growth in northern Santa Barbara County and Ventura County to the south has contributed to increased congestion of the U.S. 101 facility in the South Coast region. In response to the ongoing problem, SBCAG and Caltrans' Districts 5 and 7 came up with a four-phased approach to widening U.S. 101 in the South Coast region. Constructing the Milpas to Hot Springs Operational Improvement project began the first phase. Completed in 2012, this project added a third lane between Cabrillo Boulevard and Milpas Street. The second phase consists of adding a HOV lane between Mussel Shoals in Ventura County and the southern end of Carpinteria. Known as the Santa Barbara/Ventura HOV project, this work is currently underway and will be completed in 2015. The third phase will take place with the construction of the Linden Avenue and Casitas Pass Interchanges project, which is scheduled to begin in 2016. The project would widen U.S. 101 to accommodate a lane running between the Carpinteria Creek Bridge and through the Casitas Pass interchange. Once the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes project is constructed it will complete the fourth and final phase for widening and providing HOV lane continuity in southern Santa Barbara County.

FINDINGS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR ADDING AN HOV LANE ON BOTH SIDES OF U.S. 101 FROM CARPINTERIA CREEK IN THE CITY OF CARPINTERIA TO CABRILLO BOULEVARD IN THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

The following information is presented to comply with State 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 (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the 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.

Cultural Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:
In accordance with 36 CFR 800, a Finding of Adverse Effect has been determined for the National Register-eligible Via Real Redeposited Midden (Site #: P-42003943). Comprehensive studies suggest that the eligible portion of the site is not only located below the level of proposed Highway 101 construction, but is also located outside the state right of way--and therefore outside the Area of Direct Impact. In the unlikely event that archaeological resources are encountered during construction, the *Treatment and Data Recovery Plan for the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project, Santa Barbara County, California* will be implemented, in accordance with *the June 20, 2013 Programmatic Agreement between the California Department of Transportation and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes Project, U.S. Route 101, Santa Barbara County, California (See Appendix D, State Historic Preservation Officer Correspondence).*

Findings:
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 environmental document.

Statement of Facts:
A design change to the project included narrowing of the inside shoulder width in the northbound direction in the vicinity of the Via Real Redeposited Midden. With this change Caltrans does not anticipate impacts to the National Register-eligible site. In the unlikely event that archaeological resource are encountered during construction, the Treatment and Data Recovery Plan for the project will be implemented.

Paleontology

Adverse Environmental Effects:
Because the project study area includes three geologic formations of concern, a potential exists for encountering paleontological resources during project construction.

Findings:
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 environmental document.

Statement of Facts:
Mitigation measures, specifically monitoring (if determined to be warranted), salvage of fossil specimens, and data recovery during construction excavation for the project would reduce the adverse impact to a less than significant level. If monitoring is deemed necessary, the principal paleontologist would review the construction schedule to develop a paleontological resources plan.

Water Quality/Storm Water Runoff

Adverse Environmental Effects:
The selected alternative adds 42 acres of impervious surfaces within the project limits, which is less than 50% of the overall impervious surfaces totals. To the maximum extent practical, the proposed highway realignment would be constructed to be as hydraulically disconnected from the watersheds it crosses as possible. However, during construction the potential exists for discharging highway pollutants and contributing to erosion and sedimentation.

Findings:
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 environmental document.

Statement of Facts:
Measures to avoid temporary and permanent impacts to water quality include selecting storm water treatment best management practices that will minimize both pollutant discharges and erosion problems. The project will install appropriate permanent storm water treatment measures and drainage facilities to store and infiltrate the increased runoff within the right of way. Preliminary locations selected for biostrips have been specified in the final environmental document.

Biological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:
Natural Communities: upwards of 253 coastal live-oak trees would be removed along the right-of-way; 22 native hardwood trees and 19 arroyo willows would be removed from riparian areas; and temporary/permanent impacts to riparian vegetation would occur at

six locations where creek bridges would be either replaced with wider structures or widened.

Federal Jurisdictional Wetlands: The project would have permanent impacts to 0.001 acre and temporary impacts to 0.082 acre.

Coastal Wetlands (one parameter): The project would have permanent impacts to 0.229 acre and temporary impacts to 0.369 acre.

Other Waters of the U.S: The project would have permanent impacts to 0.249 acre and temporary impacts to 0.449 acre.

Threatened and endangered species: The project could affect the tidewater goby and their critical habitat during bridge replacement at Arroyo Paredon Creek. Incidental take of tidewater goby could also occur. The project could also affect steelhead trout and its critical habitat during bridge replacement at three creeks--Arroyo Paredon, Romero Creek, and San Ysidro, all are designated critical habitat for steelhead. Incidental take of steelhead trout could occur during construction of the three bridges.

Findings:
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 environmental document.

Statement of Facts:
Permanent impacts to riparian vegetation would be offset by replacement planting and enhancement using the following ratios: 3:1 for willows; 3:1 for coast live oaks and sycamores greater than 6 inches Diameter Breast Height; 1:1 for Monterey cypress and Monterey pines.

Permanent impacts to wetlands would be compensated at a 3:1 ratio. Offsite mitigation is proposed in the Carpinteria Salt Marsh if total mitigation cannot occur onsite. Temporary impacts to wetlands, other waters, and riparian areas would be minimized with use of environmental sensitive area fencing installed 12 feet from the work limits around wetlands and other waters. Any temporary impacts to plants/trees in the riparian areas would be mitigated by replanting and restoration efforts using a minimum of a 1:1 ratio to a maximum of a 3:1 ratio, depending on plants species. Minimization and mitigation measures for endangered species have been incorporated as directed by the biological opinions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service.

Visual Impacts/Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:
Substantial visual changes would occur throughout this ten-mile corridor due to the loss of vegetation, increased paving, and construction of recommended soundwalls. There are several major projects that were either recently constructed, currently being constructed, or planned for construction that will all contribute to an increase in the visual scale of the highway corridor and its urban character. Although each of these project would individually minimize and/or mitigate visual impacts, the cumulative visual

effect of those projects combined with the South Coast 101 HOV Lanes project would be substantial.

Findings

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 environmental document.

Statement of Facts

Soundwalls would receive aesthetic treatment such as texture and/or color along with vine plantings. Visible features such as bridges, drainages, equipment, or other features would be treated to blend into the setting as much as possible. Existing vegetation and new planting would offset some of the impacts to the visual quality of the corridor.