

Chapter 3 Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies involved in the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Project is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis necessary, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements. The scoping process for the project focused on agency consultation and public participation accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including public information meetings, monthly project development team (PDT) meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and consultation with interested parties. This chapter summarizes the results of the efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination in the environmental process.

3.1 Interagency Coordination and Consultation

The City of Lake Elsinore (City) is the project sponsor for this project. However, since the project would be constructed within State highway right-of-way, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the Lead Agency under both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The City has sought the assistance of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) to help facilitate project scheduling and coordination during the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of this project. Once PA&ED is completed, the City is anticipated to administer all contracts under the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) and Construction phases of the project.

The following sections and Table 3.A, Summary of Consultation and Coordination Activities, summarize the results of Caltrans' efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

3.1.1 Native American Consultation and Coordination

In July 2009, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was requested to review its Sacred Lands File for the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). In its July 14, 2009, correspondence, the NAHC stated that no Native American cultural resources or sacred sites are located within the project APE.

Native American consultation was initiated in September 2009 with four Native American groups recommended by the NAHC. In total, four individuals representing the three Native American groups were contacted via certified mail and email on September 21, 2009, and on May 4, 2010. Letters were followed by telephone calls and emails during October and December 2009, with Caltrans continuing consultation into 2011. This correspondence provided a description of the project and a request for the identification of potential effects to any cultural resources, sacred lands, or other heritage sites within the project area.

In September of 2009, Mr. Ontiveros (Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians) indicated the project area is regarded as highly sensitive by the Soboba and requested Native American monitoring of the project, continuity of consultation, initiation of consultation with the project developer and landowner, and transmittal of information in the event of new developments. Caltrans responded to a Pechanga request for information pertaining to cultural resources within and adjacent to the project APE on November 4, 2010, and a request for an on-site meeting on February 24, 2011.

Table 3.A: Summary of Consultation and Coordination Activities

Timing	Activity
July 2009	Consultation with the NAHC was initiated. A search of the Sacred Lands File and a list of individuals/organizations that may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area were requested.
July 2009	The NAHC responded and sent a list of Native American contacts in the vicinity of the project for further consultation. The records search of the Sacred Lands File failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the immediate project area.
July 2009	A letter was sent to the USFWS requesting the list of proposed, threatened, or endangered species potentially occurring in the vicinity of the project.
September 2009	The USFWS sent a response letter and the Proposed, Threatened, or Endangered Species List for species potentially occurring in the vicinity of the project. The list is provided in Appendix H of the <i>Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts)</i> (LSA Associates, Inc., November 2010).
August 2009	A records search was conducted at the Eastern Information Center at the University of California, Riverside in Riverside, California. The search included a review of all recorded historic and prehistoric archaeological sites within a 1-mile radius of the project area, as well as a review of known cultural resource survey and excavation reports, and a search of the inventories of the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and Caltrans Historic Highway Bridge Inventory. A total of 53 cultural resource studies were conducted within a 1 mile radius of the APE. One prehistoric resource, 27 archaeological resources, and 36 historic built resources were recorded as a result of these studies. One prehistoric resource was documented within the APE.
February 2015	The project-level particulate matter hot-spot analysis was presented to the Southern California Association of Governments TCWG for discussion and review on February 24, 2015. Per Caltrans Headquarters policy, all nonexempt projects need to go through review by the TCWG. This project was approved and concurred on by Interagency Consultation at the TCWG meeting as Not a Project of Air Quality Concern.
February 2017	A meeting was held with the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians to discuss the project and for compliance with AB 52 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
March 2017	A meeting was held with the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians to discuss the project and for compliance with AB 52 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
March 2017	Consultation with the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) to review the project's consistency with the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). This consultation also included a field visit with CDFW and USFWS.
December 2016 – August 2017	Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP. USFWS Section 7 Consultation/streamlined biological opinion is not necessary due to the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Sources: LSA Associates, Inc., *Natural Environment Study Report* (June 2017); *Historical Property Survey Report* (August 2011); and *Air Quality Analysis* (March 2015).

AB = Assembly Bill

APE = area of potential effects

Caltrans = California Department of Transportation

CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife

NAHC = Native American Heritage Commission

TCWG = Transportation Conformity Working Group

USFWS = United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Ms. Hoover (Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) expressed concern regarding the potential for impact to sites north of the project APE in February 2011. An on-site meeting was held on March 1, 2011, during which Ms. Hoover proposed spot-check monitoring.

No additional Native American Consultation was conducted as part of the *Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report* (January 2015).

3.1.1.1 Assembly Bill 52 Consultation

Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) was enacted on July 1, 2015. AB 52 added a new requirement for Native American consultation under CEQA and recognized a new cultural resource type, the tribal cultural resource (TCR). Consultation letters were mailed on February 9, 2017, to the tribes who had originally consulted with Caltrans under Section 106 for this project. Two tribes responded and requested meetings to discuss the project.

A meeting was held with the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians on February 16, 2017, and a meeting was held with the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians on March 1, 2017. Additional discussions with the Pechanga Band occurred on March 9, 2017.

During the AB 52 consultation meetings, both tribes made very similar statements and requests. During the Section 106 cultural study, no cultural resources had been identified within the project footprint. In the years since the original study was conducted, cultural resources were discovered in the areas surrounding the project footprint. Because of the general sensitivity of the area surrounding the project footprint, both tribes have requested monitoring of any ground disturbance of native soils during construction. As project designs are finalized, additional review by the tribes may eliminate areas that require monitoring.

3.1.2 United States Army Corps of Engineers

Based on email correspondence with Veronica Li, Senior Project Manager at the Los Angeles District Regulatory Division, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), dated November 29, 2016, the USACE requested a follow-up site visit to verify that site conditions have not changed prior to submittal of the application for permit verification given the amount of time that has passed since the Jurisdictional Delineation was initially prepared. Final concurrence from the USACE is anticipated to occur during the Final Design phase of the project in conjunction with completing the Section 404 permit process.

3.1.3 Resource Agencies (United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Caltrans initiated a request for review for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Consistency and the project's Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) with the Resource Agencies on December 28, 2016, to assist with Section 7 Consultation. This consisted of a review of the project's Natural Environment Study, the MSHCP Consistency Assessment Report, and the DBESP. Comments to these documents were received from John Taylor at the USFWS on February 13, 2017, which also requested additional clarification on several items in the project's biological resources technical studies identified above. A copy of the comments/requests for clarification is provided below. In response to the comments and requests for clarification, Caltrans has updated the project's Natural Environment Study, MSHCP Consistency Assessment Report, and DBESP addressing the comments and resubmitted the revised documents on June 30, 2017. This Final Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) has been updated to reflect the changes to the project's Natural Environment Study, MSHCP Consistency Assessment Report, and DBESP.

Resource Agency coordination also included receipt of a Species List from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS, June 20, 2017). A copy of the Species List is provided below.

464 W. 4th Street, MS 822, San Bernardino, CA 92401
(909) 388-2099

From: John Taylor [mailto:john_m_taylor@fws.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 2:29 PM
To: Wentworth, Craig S@DOT <Craig.Wentworth@dot.ca.gov>; Curtis, Alisha@DOT <Alisha.Curtis@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: Pert, Heather@Wildlife <Heather.Pert@wildlife.ca.gov>
Subject: I-15 Railroad Canyon & Franklin IC (EA 0A440) (FWS/CDFW-WRIV-09B0430-17TA0419)

Craig,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Interstate 15 (I-15) Railroad Canyon and Franklin Avenue Interchange Project (Project). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department), hereinafter the Wildlife Agencies, received your Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Consistency Request, Project's Natural Environmental Study (NES) and Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) on January 3, 2017. Following review of the NES, its appendices, and other related material, the Wildlife Agencies offer the following comments and requests for clarification.

1. The NES submitted in support of Caltrans' request for MSHCP Consistency, was published in August 2010. Although the Wildlife Agencies have been aware of this Project, and Caltrans submitted copies of correspondence indicating the Service received a copy of a draft NES in April 2010; due to the lapse in time and changes in staffing, the Wildlife Agencies do not have record of any Wildlife Agency comments made to Caltrans on the previous NES or DBESP. If you are able to supply the Wildlife Agencies with a copy of supporting documentation that such a review did occur, such as a list of comments received or a comment/response matrix, it would be greatly appreciated and helpful to our review.
2. Although Caltrans has submitted MSHCP Consistency materials for Wildlife Agencies review, we also understand the need for the CEQA/NEPA process. Within the draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) currently in circulation for review, the IS/EA document states "Once the Preferred Alternative is selected and prior to approval of the Final Environmental Document, Caltrans will initiate MSHCP Consistency Determination Process with the RCA. Complete MSHCP Consistency Findings shall be made prior to final approval of the IS/EA. (Pg.1-76)". With an alternative not yet selected, and the MSHCP Consistency request being sent ahead of the receipt of comments on the draft IS/EA, the Wildlife Agencies request additional information on how Caltrans intends to proceed forward with concurrent MSHCP and IS/EA reviews.
3. Aside from the submitted addendum, related to alternatives at the Railroad Canyon Interchange, information presented in the NES is over six years old. In the time since the publication of the final NES in August 2010, has the Project received subsequent engineering revisions? Specifically, is the Project footprint and impact area presented in the NES, consistent with current design of the proposed Project? Please identify how any revisions to the footprint were analyzed for MSHCP consistency.
4. The delineation of the MSHCP riparian/riverine resources is difficult to understand based on the textural description, scale of the mapped features not providing sufficient detail for analysis of drainage features, and limited information provided. While reviewing the Project area using Google Earth imagery, it does appear riparian and riverine resources are present in the Project footprint. The Wildlife Agencies request either Google Earth kmz and/or GIS files of the drainage features and Project footprint alternatives so that we can evaluate the delineation of the riparian/riverine features.

5. BUOW surveys were last performed in July 2009 and appear to have been a foot survey, a method inconsistent with the Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions within the MSHCP Plan. The Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions start with Step I, a habitat assessment, and if suitable habitat is identified then Step II should be completed which includes focused surveys. For further information please see the instructions at: http://ictima.org/Portals/1/EPD/consultant/burrowing_owl_survey_instructions.pdf.
6. The Wildlife Agencies request that burrowing survey instruction are followed by performing the habitat assessment to identify suitable habitat and perform focused surveys if applicable within and adjacent to the Project footprint. The habitat assessment should include assessment results, including maps of suitable habitat, and locations of occupied burrow or burrows with sign, if any.
7. Surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher and least Bell's vireo were last performed in 2009, the Wildlife Agencies recommend additional surveys to determine presence/absence and to ensure that the appropriate minimization measures are identified to avoid impacts to sensitive bird species, if present.
 - a. Vireo – The MSHCP Species Objective 3 for vireo, (p. B-256 of the MSHCP), states "If survey results are positive, 90 percent of the occupied portions of the property that provide for long-term conservation value for the vireo shall be conserved in a manner consistent with conservation of the vireo. This will involve including 100 meters of undeveloped landscape adjacent to the habitat conserved." How was the 100 meter buffer requirement addressed in the Project's avoidance and minimization measures?
8. With possible vernal pools present in Franklin IC footprint, per hardcopy version - Figure 1 in sub-appendix B (*Species associated with Riparian/Riverine and Vernal Pool Areas*) of Appendix C (DBESP), and no supporting documentation to indicate protocol vernal pool surveys were performed, the Wildlife Agencies recommend Caltrans re-survey the Project footprint to evaluate the potential for vernal pool impacts.
9. The Wildlife Agencies recommend any lights installed within 300-feet of San Jacinto River (Linkage 42), utilize wildlife-friendly lighting. Lighting examples include either LPS mast-arm lighting installations or wildlife-friendly LED luminaries. Wildlife-friendly LED technology was approved by Caltrans Headquarters for facility installation in 2016. Should you require additional information related to this luminaire, please contact John Taylor of the Service.
10. Regarding nesting bird surveys; although the nesting dates vary between species, the Wildlife Agencies have considered February 15 to August 1 the time of year when a majority of avian species will breed. Please note that some species of raptors (e.g., owls and falcons) may commence nesting activities in January, and passerines may nest later than August 1. Therefore, the Wildlife Agencies encourage all agencies to complete nesting bird surveys, regardless of time of year, to ensure compliance with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Please note that it is the Project proponent's responsibility to comply with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*), and sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code
11. The Wildlife Agencies request information related to proposed mitigation to offset impacts to riparian/riverine resources.
12. Lastly, the composition of the NES includes multiple appendices with duplicate information and duplicative naming conventions and incorrect labeling. The Wildlife Agencies request Caltrans revise the NES to include only the most recent and relevant material to assist in the review of the Project's consistency with the MSHCP. A submittal containing a separate NES and MSHCP Consistency Request/DBESP would greatly assist the Wildlife Agencies in review of the documents.

If you could please address the above items, the Wildlife Agencies will again review the Project to ensure consistency with the Western Riverside MSHCP. We would like to request a meeting and possibly a site visit to facilitate our review and hopefully expedite this process to help work through some of our questions. Should you have any questions, please contact myself or Heather Pert via the contact information listed below.

John M. Taylor

Fish & Wildlife Biologist

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Palm Springs

777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208

Palm Springs, CA 92262

Ph: 760-322-2070 x418 (Please note new extension)

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And

Heather A. Pert, PhD

Inland Deserts Region, R6

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Save Our
Water





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office
2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385
Phone: (760) 431-9440 Fax: (760) 431-5901
<http://www.fws.gov/carlsbad/>



In Reply Refer To:

June 20, 2017

Consultation Code: 08ECAR00-2016-SLI-0802

Event Code: 08ECAR00-2017-E-02166

Project Name: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange

Subject: Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, and proposed species, designated critical habitat, and candidate species that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the

human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (<http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm>; <http://www.towerkill.com>; and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html>.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office
2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385
(760) 431-9440

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 08ECAR00-2016-SLI-0802

Event Code: 08ECAR00-2017-E-02166

Project Name: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with the City of Lake Elsinore and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes improvements to the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road interchange (IC) and the construction of a new interchange 0.22 miles north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing in the City of Lake Elsinore.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/33.66316334175849N117.29794011420526W>



Counties: Riverside, CA

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 15 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on your species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
San Bernardino Merriam's Kangaroo Rat (<i>Dipodomys merriami parvus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2060	Endangered
Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (<i>Dipodomys stephensi</i> (incl. <i>D. cascus</i>)) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3495	Endangered

Birds

NAME	STATUS
Coastal California Gnatcatcher (<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8178	Threatened
Least Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered
Western Snowy Plover (<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>) Population: Pacific Coast population DPS-U.S.A. (CA, OR, WA), Mexico (within 50 miles of Pacific coast) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8035	Threatened

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Quino Checkerspot Butterfly (<i>Euphydryas editha quino</i> (= <i>E. e. wrighti</i>)) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5900	Endangered

Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Riverside Fairy Shrimp (<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8148	Endangered
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498	Threatened

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
<p>California Orcutt Grass (<i>Orcuttia californica</i>)</p> <p>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4923</p>	Endangered
<p>Munz's Onion (<i>Allium munzii</i>)</p> <p>There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2951</p>	Endangered
<p>San Diego Ambrosia (<i>Ambrosia pumila</i>)</p> <p>There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8287</p>	Endangered
<p>San Jacinto Valley Crownscale (<i>Atriplex coronata</i> var. <i>notatior</i>)</p> <p>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4353</p>	Endangered
<p>Spreading Navarretia (<i>Navarretia fossalis</i>)</p> <p>There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1334</p>	Threatened
<p>Thread-leaved Brodiaea (<i>Brodiaea filifolia</i>)</p> <p>There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat.</p> <p>Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6087</p>	Threatened

Critical habitats

There are no critical habitats within your project area.

3.1.4 Transportation Conformity Working Group

The project-level particulate matter hot-spot analysis was presented to Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Transportation Conformity Working Group (TCWG) for discussion and review on February 24, 2015. As discussed in Section 2.15, Air Quality, per Caltrans Headquarters policy, all nonexempt projects need to be reviewed by the TCWG. This project was approved and concurred upon by the TCWG as not a Project of Air Quality Concern. A copy of the TCWG finding is provided below.

**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**February 24, 2015
Minutes**

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP. A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN SCAG'S OFFICE.

The Meeting of the Transportation Conformity Working Group was held at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.

In Attendance:

Abrishami, Lori
Jaffery, Edison
Louka, Tony
Yaha, Randy
Morris, Michael
Sherwood, Arnie

Metro
Caltrans, District 8
Caltrans, District 8
Caltrans, District 8
FHWA
UC Berkeley

SCAG

Asuncion, John
Luo, Rongsheng
Tran, Daniel

Via Teleconference:

Alvarez, Grace
Aurasteh, Reza
Bai, Song
Cacatian, Ben
Castro, Fernando
DeHate, Eric
Gallo, Ilene
Lay, Keith
Moe-Luna, Lorelle
Odufalu, Olufemi
Philips, Heather
Tax, Wienke
Tavitas, Rodney
Vaughn, Joseph
Wade, Dennis
Wong, Jillian
Wright, Larry

RCTC
Caltrans, District 12
Sonoma Technology
VCAPCD
Caltrans, District 7
RCTC
Caltrans, District 11
LSA Associates
RCTC
Caltrans, District 8
ARB
EPA
Caltrans Headquarters
FHWA
ARB
SCAQMD
OCTA

**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**February 24, 2015
Minutes**

1.0 CALL TO ORDER AND SELF-INTRODUCTION

Tony Louka, TCWG Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Mr. Louka acknowledged three former TCWG members - Stew Sonnenberg, FHWA; Cari Anderson, ARB; and Dr. Paul Fagan, formerly Caltrans District 8 - who recently left TCWG. Rongsheng Luo, SCAG, expressed appreciation and gratitude for their services and contribution to the TCWG and wished them best of luck in their new endeavors.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

3.1 TCWG December 2, 2014 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved.

3.2 TCWG January 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were deferred to the next meeting.

4.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

4.1 Review of PM Hot Spot Interagency Review Forms

1) LA0G755

It was determined that this is not a POAQC (EPA concurrence received via email before the meeting).

2) RIV010206

It was determined that this is not a POAQC (EPA concurrence received via email before the meeting).

4.2 FTIP Update

John Asuncion, SCAG, reported the following:

- 2015 FTIP Amendment #15-04 was under federal review for approval.
- 2015 FTIP Administrative Modification #15-05 was under SCAG review and expected to be approved soon.

In response to a question, Michael Morris, FHWA, stated that 2015 FTIP Amendment #15-04 was anticipated to receive federal approval in about two weeks.

**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**February 24, 2015
Minutes**

4.3 RTP Update

Daniel Tran, SCAG, reported the following:

- SCAG staff was in the process of coding transportation network based on input from County Transportation Commissions and expected the coding to be completed in March.
- Draft 2016-2040 RTP/SCS was anticipated to be released for public review in fall 2015.
- Final 2016-2040 RTP/SCS was anticipated to be adopted by SCAG's Regional Council in April 2016.

In response to a question, Mr. Tran, SCAG, confirmed that 2015 FTIP Consistent Amendment #15-99 follows the same process and schedule as 2016-2040 RTP/SCS.

4.4 EPA Update

Wienke Tax, EPA Region 9, reported the following:

- EPA had published in Federal Register a proposed rule to find that South Coast had attained 1997 PM2.5 standards; Only one comment letter from Earthjustice was received; And the proposal was anticipated to be finalized in spring 2015.
- Published in Federal Register on January 15, 2015, final area designations for 2012 PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standards will become effective April 15, 2015.
- Final SIP Implementation Rule for 2008 8-hour ozone standards was signed by EPA Administrator on February 13, 2015; Upon its effective date, expected in late March or early April 2015, 1997 8-hour ozone standards will be re-revoked for all purposes including transportation conformity; 1997 8-hour ozone standards had been previously revoked by EPA for transportation conformity purposes only; However, the EPA action was vacated by a court order in December 2014; as a result, transportation conformity requirements reapply for 1997 ozone standards until the re-revocation becomes effective.
- Proposed 2015 8-hour Ozone standards had been published in Federal Register and EPA is accepting public comments until March 17, 2015.

Joseph Vaughn, FHWA, reported that FHWA can accept and review but cannot approve project-level conformity determinations for 1997 8-hour ozone standards until after effective date of re-revocation of 1997 ozone standards around late March or early April 2015.

**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**February 24, 2015
Minutes**

4.7 ARB Update

Heather Philips, ARB, reported the following:

- EMFAC2014 is expected to be submitted to U.S. EPA around March 2015; EPA staff had indicated that it will take EPA about three to six months to review for approval; and there will be a grace period for transition from EMFAC2011 to EMFAC2014.

4.8 Air Districts Update

Jillian Baker, SCAQMD, reported that SCAQMD's Mobile Source Committee discussed about EPA's proposed revisions to 8-hour ozone standards and SCAMQD's draft comment letter at its last meeting on February 20; Staff presentation and draft District comment letter are available on SCAQMD website at <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/library/meeting-agendas-minutes/agenda?title=mobile-source-02202015>.

5.0 INFORMATION SHARING

Rodney Tavitias, Caltrans Headquarters, announced that Mr. Yoojoong Choi has taken over environmental analysis and transportation conformity responsibilities from Mr. Jim Elder.

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

The next Transportation Conformity Working Group meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at the SCAG office in downtown Los Angeles.

3.1.5 Coordination with the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority

Consultation with the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) to review the project's consistency with the Western Riverside County MSHCP was initiated following public review of the Draft IS/EA on March 16, 2017. During the consultation, several concerns were raised related to potential impacts to threatened/endangered fairy shrimp species, bat species, and least Bell's vireo (LBV).

Based on the consultation, the following additional project environmental commitment, to address potential impacts related to threatened/endangered fairy shrimp species within depressional areas within the project limits, shall be implemented (see Measure TE-3 in Section 2.21.4 of this IS/EA):

TE-3: To address potential impacts to listed fairy shrimp species potentially within depressional areas that would be affected by project implementation, the following program and implementation actions to be completed after approval of the Final IS/EA document but prior to any ground-disturbance activities within depressional areas that may be potentially affected by project implementation shall be required. Only one of the two options identified below is required to address potential impacts to listed fairy shrimp species potentially within depressional areas within the project limits:

Option A

- 1) Conduct one single dry-season (i.e., no water present) fairy shrimp sampling within the depressional areas that would be affected by the project to determine if fairy shrimp cysts are present. The sampling shall require special authorization from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. If cysts are determined to be present, assume presence of listed fairy shrimp species within depressional areas that would be affected by project implementation without hatching the cysts.
- 2) Remove the top two inches of soil from these areas and translocate the soil to an area of fairy shrimp habitat creation to be determined in consultation with the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) and approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The long-term management of the fairy shrimp habitat where soils will be translocated if listed fairy shrimp are found shall be the responsibility of the City. If the receptor site is not suitable due to insufficient area for placement outside of existing seasonal pool and smooth tarplant mitigation areas, the RCA would be willing to accept soils and long term management of the same if an appropriate RCA owned and managed receptor site can be identified. In order to minimize potential damage to fairy shrimp cysts, the soil must be dry when it is removed.

- 3) Upon translocation of the soils as approved by the RCA and the Wildlife Agencies, no additional measures for fairy shrimp will be required, and impacts to the depressional areas affected by project implementation may proceed.

Option B

- 1) Conduct one single dry-season (i.e., no water present) fairy shrimp survey/sampling within the depressional areas that would be affected by the project. The survey/sampling shall require special authorization from the USFWS.
- 2) If fairy shrimp cysts are found during the survey/sampling, an attempt to hatch them shall be made.
- 3) If hatching is unsuccessful, or if hatching is successful and vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) or San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*) (i.e., listed fairy shrimp) are identified among the hatched fairy shrimp, the soil from the affected depressions shall be translocated to an area of existing fairy shrimp habitat to be determined in consultation with the RCA and approved by the USFWS and CDFW. The long-term management of the fairy shrimp habitat where soils will be translocated if listed fairy shrimp are found shall be the responsibility of the City. If the receptor site is not suitable due to insufficient area for placement outside of existing seasonal pool and smooth tarplant mitigation areas, the RCA would be willing to accept soils and long term management of the same if an appropriate RCA owned and managed receptor site can be identified. In order to minimize potential damage to fairy shrimp cysts, the soil must be dry when it is removed.
- 4) If hatching is successful and hatched fairy shrimp are all determined to be versatile fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lindahli*, a common species), no additional measures for fairy shrimp shall be required, and impacts to the depressional areas affected by project implementation may proceed.

Additionally, appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address bats, identified below, will require that prior to construction, an agency-approved bat biologist will conduct a bat assessment to identify the potential for bat species to occur within the project limits. Should the presence of bats be determined during the assessment, appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to reduce impacts, as described below, shall be implemented (see Measure AN-9 in Section 2.20.4 of this IS/EA).

- Prior to construction, an agency-approved bat biologist shall conduct a bat assessment survey to determine the presence or absence of bat species that may occur within the project limits. Should the presence of bat species be determined during this assessment, the following measures shall be implemented to address potential impacts to bats.

- Project-related construction activities shall occur outside of the bat maternity roosting season (April 1–August 31), if feasible. Should such activities occur during the maternity roosting season (April 1–August 31), the following measures shall be implemented to minimize potential impacts to day-roosting bats (including maternity colonies) from project construction.
- Nighttime exit counts and acoustic surveys shall be performed by a qualified bat biologist at all structures that may be subject to project-related impacts. These surveys shall be performed during the recognized bat maternity season (April 1–August 31, but preferably in June or July), and as far in advance of construction as possible in order to provide adequate time for mitigation planning.
- Construction activities at structures housing maternity colonies shall be coordinated with an agency-approved bat biologist and the CDFW.
- If direct impacts to bat-roosting habitat are anticipated, humane evictions and exclusions of roosting bats should be performed under the supervision of an agency-approved bat biologist after August 31 in the fall (September or October) prior to any work activities that would result in direct impacts or direct mortality to roosting bats. This action will be performed in coordination with the CDFW. To avoid potential mortality of flightless juvenile bats, evictions and exclusions of bats cannot be performed during the maternity season (April 1–August 31). Winter months are also inappropriate for bat eviction because not all individuals in a roost will emerge on any given night. In addition, long-distance movements to other roost sites are more difficult during the winter when prey availability is scarce, resulting in high mortality rates of evicted bats.
- Alternate bat-roosting habitat structures should be installed on the structure prior to the eviction/exclusion of bats from that structure. The design, numbers, and locations of these roost structures should be determined in consultation with an agency-approved bat biologist.
- If permanent, direct impacts to bat-roosting habitat are anticipated and a humane eviction/exclusion is performed, alternate permanent roosting habitat shall be provided to ensure no net loss of bat-roosting habitat. This action shall be coordinated with the CDFW, and locations of these roost structures should be determined in consultation with an agency-approved bat biologist to ensure that the installed habitat will provide adequate mitigation for impacts.
- The loss of a night roost can negatively affect the use of a foraging area, and consequently may result in reduced fecundity in species that are already slow to reproduce. If night roosting is confirmed at any of the structures within the proposed project area, the following measure to minimize potential impacts to night-roosting and foraging bats shall be implemented:
- At structures where night roosting is suspected or confirmed, work shall be limited to the daylight hours to the greatest extent feasible to avoid potential disruption of foraging. If night work cannot be avoided, night lighting shall be focused only on the area of direct work, airspace access to and from the roost features of the structure shall not be obstructed, and light spillover into the adjacent foraging areas shall be minimized to the greatest extent feasible.

Lastly, the identification of a specific buffer distance of 500 feet to address potential indirect impacts to the LBV within the identified territory of the LBV within the San Jacinto River during the LBV's nesting season (March 15–September 1) was

recommended to be incorporated into **Minimization Measure TE-1**. This specified buffer distance would ensure that no adverse impacts to LBV would occur from project implementation. Although the southwestern willow flycatcher (SWWF) was not observed during the 2009 focused survey, this species may utilize riparian habitat occupied by the LBV within the San Jacinto River. Revised **Minimization Measure TE-1** for the LBV will also avoid and minimize any impact to SWWF as the SWWF breeding season is May 1 to August 31.

TE-1 Prior to clearing or construction during the least Bell's vireo nesting season (March 15 to September 1), highly visible barriers (such as orange construction fencing) will be installed providing a minimum 500-foot buffer around riparian and riverine communities adjacent to the project footprint to be flagged as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) to be preserved. The ESAs will serve as an exclusionary buffer delineating areas where no work shall be performed during the least Bell's vireo nesting season. More specifically, no grading or fill activity of any type will be permitted within these ESAs. In addition, heavy equipment, including motor vehicles, will not be allowed to operate within the ESAs. All construction equipment will be operated in a manner so as to prevent accidental damage to nearby preserved areas. No structure of any kind, or incidental storage of equipment or supplies, shall be allowed within these protected zones. Silt fence barriers will be installed at the ESA boundary to prevent accidental deposition of fill material in areas where vegetation is adjacent to planned grading activities. These special provisions shall be incorporated into the project's specifications and construction documents.

3.2 Public Review

The Draft IS/EA prepared for the project was circulated for public review and comment between January 12, 2017, and February 13, 2017.

A Notice of Availability of an EA/Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration/Study Results Available/Announcement of Public Information Meeting was published in the following newspapers: *Press-Enterprise* (January 12, 2017) and *La Prensa* (January 13, 2017). There were multiple purposes served by these notices; they informed the public of all the following: the scheduled public information meeting on the Draft IS/EA, the availability of the Draft IS/EA for public review, the length of the public review period for the IS/EA, the locations at which the IS/EA was available, how the public could participate in the process, and where and how they could submit comments on the Draft IS/EA.

The published notice was also mailed to the distribution list names included in Chapter 5 of this Final IS/EA, which included all occupants/owners of all addresses within a 500-foot radius of the project limits, including those property owners who could be potentially impacted by the property acquisitions. Additionally, compact disc copies of the Draft IS/EA were mailed to all property owners of parcels that, based on preliminary engineering efforts, might potentially need to be partially or fully acquired in conjunction with the project. The English and Spanish published notices

are provided below. Printed copies and/or compact disc copies of the Draft IS/EA were mailed to responsible agencies and other agencies.

The Notice of Completion was provided to the State Clearinghouse for purposes of documenting circulation, and copies of the Draft IS/EA were also transmitted for distribution to various State agencies.

The complete Draft IS/EA and supporting technical studies were made available for public review at the following locations:

- California Department of Transportation, District 8 Office, 464 West Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92401
- Riverside County Transportation Commission, 4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor, Riverside, CA 92502
- City of Lake Elsinore Engineering Department, 130 South Main Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
- Lake Elsinore Branch Library, 600 West Graham Avenue, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530



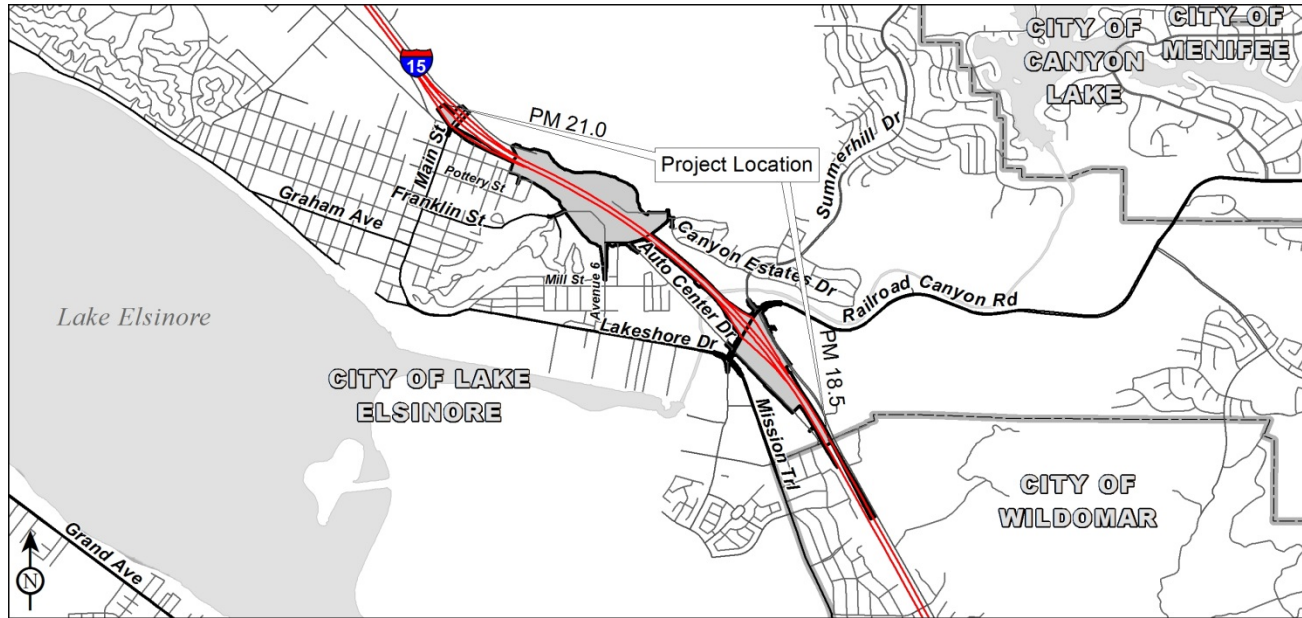
PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration Study Results Available Public Information Meeting

EA 0A4400



Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project



WHAT IS BEING PLANNED?	The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the City of Lake Elsinore, proposes improvements to the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road interchange (IC) and the construction of a new interchange 0.22 mile north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing. The proposed Project is located in the City of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County. Along I-15, the Project construction limits extend from Post Mile (PM) 18.3 at the southerly limits to PM 21.0 at the northerly limits. The proposed Project would reconstruct the existing Railroad Canyon Road IC and construct a new four lane overcrossing/interchange approximately 1,160 feet north of the existing Franklin Street overcrossing to reduce local street congestion, and accommodate projected growth in the area. The proposed work involves sites on a list enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code pertaining to hazardous wastes.
WHY THIS AD?	Caltrans has studied the effects this project may have on the environment. Our studies show it will not significantly affect the quality of the environment. This notice is to inform you of the preparation of the Draft Initial Study (with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration)/ Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) and of its availability for you to read. A public information meeting will be held to give you an opportunity to talk about certain design features of the project with Caltrans staff before the final design is selected. The tentative schedule for the purchase of land for right-of-way and construction will also be discussed and Caltrans staff will explain the Department's relocation assistance for residents moved by the project. Project-level conformity analysis shows that the project will conform to the State Implementation Plan, including localized impact analysis with interagency consultation for carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) required by 40 CFR 93.116 and 93.123. This project is not considered a Project of Air Quality Concern regarding particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) as defined in 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1). A detailed PM10 and PM2.5 hot-spot analysis was not completed because Clean Air Act and 40 CFR 93.116 requirements are met without an explicit hot-spot analysis. The project comes from a conforming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Comment is requested regarding the project-level conformity analysis.
WHAT'S AVAILABLE?	Maps for the Draft IS/EA and other project information are available for review and copying at the Caltrans District 8 Office, 464 W. Fourth St., San Bernardino, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Draft IS/EA also is available for review Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at: Riverside County Transportation Commission, 4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor, Riverside; Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the City of Lake Elsinore Engineering Department, 130 South Main Street, Lake Elsinore; and Monday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday/Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Lake Elsinore Branch Library, 600 West Graham Avenue, Lake Elsinore. The Draft IS/EA also is available for review at the City of Lake Elsinore's website at http://www.lake-elsinore.org/city-hall/city-departments/city-clerk/notices
WHERE YOU COME IN	Do you have any comments about processing the project with a Negative Declaration and IS/EA? Do you disagree with the findings of our study as set forth in the Draft IS/EA? Would you care to make any other comments on the project? Please submit your comments in writing no later than 5 pm, February 13, 2017 to Marie Petry, California Department of Transportation, District 8, Division of Environmental Planning, 464 W. Fourth St., Mail Station 821, San Bernardino, CA 92401 or via e-mail to marie.petry@dot.ca.gov . For email comments, please include "I-15 Railroad Canyon Road" in the subject line. The date we will begin accepting comments is January 12, 2017 . If there are no major comments, Caltrans, in cooperation with RCTC, and the City of Lake Elsinore, will proceed with the project as planned.
WHEN AND WHERE?	The public information meeting, in an open house format, will be held February 1, 2017, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. , at the City of Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, 183 N. Main Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530.
CONTACT/SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS	Individuals who require documents in alternative formats are requested to contact RCTC, Attn: Alex Menor, 4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor, Riverside, CA 92501, (951) 787-7970 (voice) or use the California Relay Service (800) 735-2929 (TTY), (800) 735-2929 (voice), or 711.



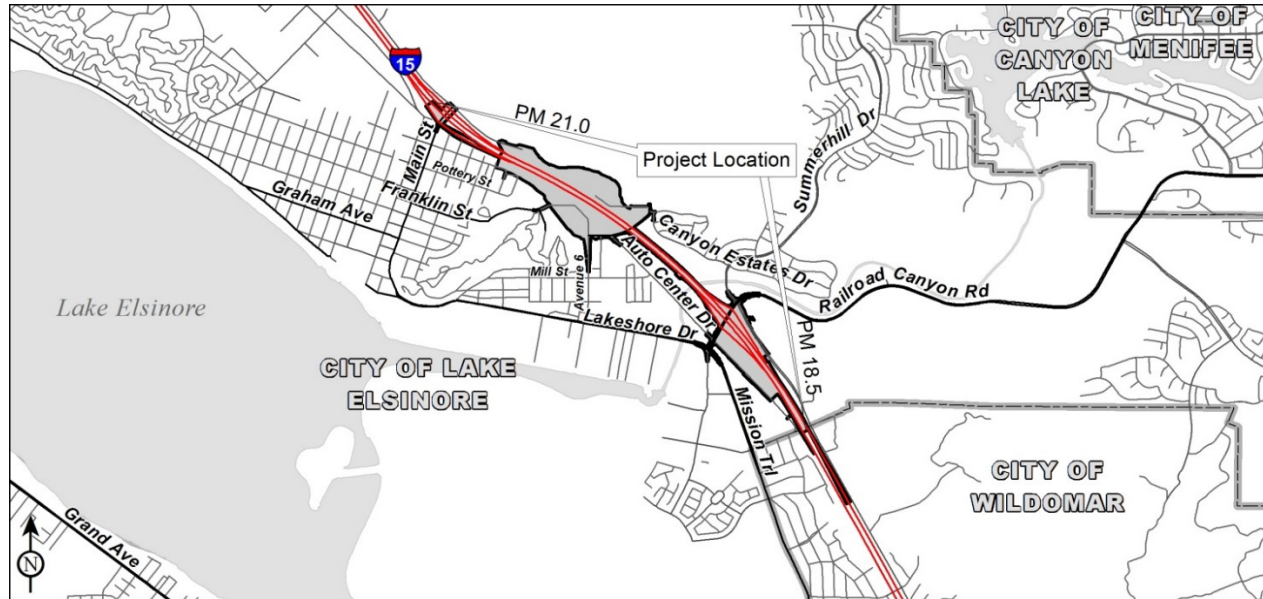
Aviso al Público

Aviso de Disponibilidad de una Evaluación Ambiental Aviso de Intención de Adoptar una Declaración Negativa Mitigada Resultados de Estudios Ambientales Están Disponibles Aviso de una Audiencia Pública

EA 0A4400



Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project



¿QUÉ ES LO PLANEADO?	El Departamento de Transporte de California (Caltrans por sus siglas en Inglés), en cooperación con el Departamento de Transporte del Condado de Riverside (RCTC) y la ciudad de Lake Elsinore, proponen mejorar el intercambio (IC) de autopista Interestatal 15 (I-15) con el cruce Railroad Canyon Road y la construcción de un nuevo intercambio aproximadamente 0.22 millas al norte del puente I-15/Franklin Street. El proyecto propuesto está localizado en la Ciudad de Lake Elsinore en el Condado de Riverside. Sobre el I-15 los límites de construcción del proyecto se extienden desde la milla 18.3 (Post Mile) en el sur hasta la milla 21.0 al Norte. El proyecto propuesto reconstruirá el existente cruce con Railroad Canyon Road y construirá un nuevo sobre cruce/intercambio de cuatro carriles aproximadamente 1,160 pies al norte del existente sobre cruce en Franklin Street para reducir la congestión de las calles locales y para tener capacidad para el crecimiento pronosticado en el área. El trabajo propuesto incluye sitios en una lista enumerado bajo la Sección 65962.5 del Código de Gobierno relacionados a residuos peligrosos.
¿PORQUE ESTE AVISO?	Caltrans ha estudiado los efectos que este proyecto puede traer al medio ambiente. Nuestros estudios concluyen que no afectaran la calidad del medio ambiente. Este aviso es para informarle sobre la preparación del Proyecto De Estudio Inicial (con un propuesta Declaración Negativa Mitigada)/ Evaluación Ambiental (IS/EA) y la disponibilidad de este documento para que el público lea. Se llevará a cabo una audiencia pública para dar la oportunidad de hablar con empleados de Caltrans acerca de ciertas características de diseño del proyecto antes de elegir el diseño final. El calendario provisional para la compra de tierra para facilitar el proyecto y otros derechos provisionales durante la construcción también se discutirán. Empleados de Caltrans explicarán la asistencia de reubicación para los residentes mudados por el proyecto. Análisis de Conformidad a nivel de proyecto demuestra que el proyecto se ajustara al Plan de Implementación Del Estado (SIP), incluyendo análisis de impacto localizado con consultación interinstitucional para Monóxido de Carbón y materia particular (PM10 and PM2.5) requeridos por 40 CFR 93.116 and 93.123. Este proyecto no es considerado un proyecto de preocupación de Calidad de Aire con respecto a materia particular (PM10 and PM2.5) definido en 40 CFR 93.123(b)(1) y por esa razón, un análisis detallado de PM10 y PM2.5 no fue completado ya que los requerimientos del Clean Air Act y 40 CFR 93.116 fueron cumplidos. El proyecto está incluido en el plan regional (RTP) que conforma con el Programa de Proyectos de Mejoras de Transportación Pública (TIP). Se aceptarán comentarios acerca del Análisis de conformidad a nivel de proyecto.
¿QUÉ ESTÁ DISPONIBLE?	Mapas para el Estudio Inicial (IS/EA) y otra información sobre el proyecto están disponibles para que el público examine y reproduzca copias en la Oficinas de Caltrans Distrito 8, 464 W. Fourth St., San Bernardino, de Lunes a Viernes de 8 a.m. a 4 p.m. El Estudio Inicial (IS/EA) también estará disponible para revisar/examinar de Lunes a Jueves de 8 a.m. a 5:30 p.m. y Viernes de 8 a.m. a 4:30 p.m. en: Riverside County Transportation Commission , 4080 Lemon St., 3rd Floor, Riverside; al igual que en el Departamento de Ingeniería de la Ciudad de Lake Elsinore, 130 S. Main St., Lake Elsinore de Lunes a Jueves de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. y Viernes de 8 a.m. a 4 p.m.; y en la biblioteca pública de Lake Elsinore, 600 West Graham Ave., Lake Elsinore los Lunes de 10 a.m. a 6 p.m., Martes 11 a.m. a 7 p.m., Miércoles y Jueves de 10 a.m. a 6 p.m., Viernes de 10 a.m. a 5 p.m. y Sábado de 10 a.m. a 2 p.m. El Estudio Inicial (IS/EA) también será disponible en el sitio web de la Ciudad de Lake Elsinore http://www.lake-elsinore.org/city-hall/city-departments/city-clerk/notices
¿CUÁL ES SU PARTE?	¿Tiene usted algún comentario sobre el procesamiento de la Declaración Negativa Mitigada y del IS/EA? ¿Se opone usted a las recomendaciones de nuestros estudios expuestos en el Estudio Inicial (IS/EA)? ¿Le gustaría hacer algún otro comentario sobre el proyecto? Por favor envíe sus comentarios por escrito no más tardar de las 5 p.m. del 13 de Febrero 2017 a Marie Petry, California Department of Transportation, District 8, Division of Environmental Planning, 464 W. Fourth St. Mail Station 821, San Bernardino, CA 92401 o por correo electrónico a Marie.petry@dot.ca.gov . Para comentarios por correo electrónico por favor incluya "I-15 Railroad Canyon Road" en la línea de asunto. Comenzaremos a aceptar comentarios el 12 de Enero de 2017. Si no existen comentarios mayores, Caltrans en cooperación con RCTC y la ciudad de Lake Elsinore, continuara con el proyecto como está planeado.
¿CUÁNDO Y DÓNDE?	La audiencia pública se llevara a cabo en un formato de foro abierto, el Miércoles, 1 de Febrero de 2017, de 5:30 p.m. a 7:30 p.m. en el Centro Cultural de la Ciudad de Lake Elsinore, 183 N. Main St, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530
CONTACTO/ ALOJAMIENTOS ESPECIALES	Para individuos que requieren diferente forma de comunicación, por favor pónganse en contacto con RCTC, Attn: Alex Menor, 4080 Lemon St. 3rd Floor, Riverside, CA 92501, (951) 787-7970 o el Servicio de Retransmisión de California (800) 735-2929 (TTY), (800) 735-2929, o 711.

An Open Forum Public Information Meeting was held at the City of Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, located at 183 North Main Street in the City of Lake Elsinore, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on February 1, 2017. Approximately 13 members of the public attended the public information meeting. Four comment cards were turned in at the public information meeting. Questions and concerns raised by those who attended the public hearing primarily focused on traffic operations and possible impacts to businesses. The comment cards, letters, and emailed comments are all included at the end of this chapter. Section 3.3, below, explains how the individual comments and responses are organized and presented in this Final Environmental Document.

3.3 Comments and Responses to Comments

3.3.1 Comments Received

Table 3.B provides a complete indexed list of the comments received on the circulated Draft IS/EA, and also includes the comment cards received at the public information meeting. The index numbers are based on a unique letter and number code for each comment, for organizational purposes.

Table 3.B: Comment Letters Received During Public Comment Period

Letter	Name	Date
A	Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	February 6, 2017
B	California Department of Toxic Substances Control	February 8, 2017
C	Federal Emergency Management Agency	January 19, 2017
D	Cal Fire – Riverside Unit Riverside County Fire Department	February 4, 2017
E	Pechanga Tribal Historic Preservation Office	February 13, 2017
F	Native American Heritage Commission	February 2, 2017
G	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	February 16, 2017
H	Leonard Leichnitz	February 9, 2017
I	Jim D'Angelo	January 13, 2017
J	Judy Lovitt	January 18, 2017
K	Cheryl Feskowitz	February 1, 2017
L	Ashok and Kay Talwar	February 1, 2017
M	Pat Young	February 8, 2017
N	Larry Dirgo	February 12, 2017
O	John and Kelly Jackson	February 12, 2017
P	Dennis and Sue Wright	February 8, 2017
Q	Lisa Shirley	February 8, 2017
R	Alex Gonzalez, Tradeland Properties, LLC	February 6, 2017
S	Roberta Alexander	February 8, 2017
T	Donald A. Nordine	February 1, 2017

3.3.2 Format of Responses to Comments

Responses to the comment letters are provided in Table 3.B, which follows on pages 3-19 to 3-103. The responses to comments are organized to correspond specifically to the comment, starting with the base comment index letter/number designation. All of the comments received are included below along with the responses to comments. The copies of the comments also show the complete index letter/number, for cross-reference purposes.

JASON E. UHLEY
General Manager/Chief Engineer



RIVERSIDE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL
AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

January 26, 2017

1995 MARKET STREET
RIVERSIDE, CA 92501
951.955.1200
FAX 951.788.9965
www.rcflood.org

A

Ms. Marie Petry
California Department of Transportation, District 8
Division of Environmental Planning
464 West Fourth Street, MS 821
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Dear Ms. Petry:

Re: I-15/Railroad Canyon Road
Interchange Improvement Project

This letter is written in response to the Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment/Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the City of Lake Elsinore, proposes improvements to the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange and the construction of a new interchange 0.22 miles north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing. The proposed project is located in the city of Lake Elsinore in Riverside County. Along I-15, the project construction limits extend from post mile (PM) 18.3 at the southerly limits to PM 21.0 at the northerly limits. The project would reconstruct the existing Franklin Street overcrossing to reduce local street congestion and accommodate projected growth in the area. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) has reviewed the environmental document and has the following comments:

Based on our records, District facilities are located outside of the project area. Therefore, Minimization Measure HY-1, requiring submittal of plans and an encroachment permit to the District for review and concurrence, appears not to be necessary.

A-1

Thank you for the opportunity to review the environmental document. Any further questions concerning this letter may be referred to Kinika Hesterly at khesterl@rivco.org or 951.955.4643 or me at kflaniga@rivco.org or 951.955.8581.

Very truly yours,


KRIS FLANIGAN
Engineering Project Manager

cc: Amy McNeill

KH:mcv
P8210259

Comment

Response

A-1

Per direction from Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, **Minimization Measure HY-1** is not required. As a result, it is not included in this Final IS/EA.

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February 8, 2017

Ms. Marie Petry
Senior Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation, District 8
464 West 4th Street, 7th Floor, Mail Station 821
San Bernardino, California 92401-1400

INITIAL STUDY [WITH PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
(ND)/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR INTERSTATE 15/RAILROAD CANYON
ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT (SCH# 2017011018)

Dear Ms. Petry:

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has reviewed the subject ND. The following project description is stated in the ND: "The City of Lake Elsinore, in cooperation with the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes improvements to the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road interchange (IC) and the construction of a new interchange 0.22 mile north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing in the City of Lake Elsinore."

Based on the review of the submitted document DTSC has the following comments:

1. The ND should identify and determine whether current or historic uses at the project site may have resulted in any release of hazardous wastes/substances. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment may be appropriate to identify any recognized environmental conditions.

B-1

2. If there are any recognized environmental conditions in the project area, then proper investigation, sampling and remedial actions overseen by the appropriate regulatory agencies should be conducted prior to the new development or any construction.

B-2

3. If the project plans include discharging wastewater to a storm drain, you may be required to obtain an NPDES permit from the overseeing Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

B-3

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Comment	Response
B-1	An Initial Site Assessment (ISA) was prepared for the project in March 2015 (revised May 2015). The following tasks were conducted as part of this ISA; Environmental Database Review, Agency Records Review, Historic Research, and Site Reconnaissance. Results from these reviews are discussed in detail in Section 2.14 Hazardous Waste and Materials, of this Final IS/EA. Several minimization measures are identified in Section 2.14.4 of this Final IS/EA to address the potential to encounter hazardous waste or materials.
B-2	<p>Section 2.14.3 of this Final IS/EA, Hazardous Waste and Materials Environmental Consequences, details potential hazards of concern for the project area. These hazards include two Historical Recognized Environmental Conditions (HREC), and a Controlled Recognized Environmental Condition (CREC), all which pose a low risk to the project area.</p> <p>Additionally, as outlined in Minimization Measure HAZ-1 (Site Investigations), during final design, the City of Lake Elsinore (City) Project Manager will require a qualified engineer/geologist (Contract Qualified Engineer/Geologist) under contract to the City to conduct site investigations and soil testing for hazardous materials sites identified in the <i>Updated Initial Site Assessment</i> (ISA) (March 2015 [revised May 2015]) that are within the right-of-way of Alternative 2.</p> <p>The performance standard for this measure is in compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations. The Site Investigation Report will meet or exceed the requirements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Standards and Practices for All Appropriate Inquiries (FR 66070, Vol. 70, No. 210, November 1, 2005).</p> <p>The Site Investigation Report will be submitted to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 8 Hazardous Waste Coordinator for review and approval of areas within the State right-of-way.</p>
B-3	<p>Section 2.11 of this Final IS/EA, Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff, details the project's compliance with the necessary NPDES permits. Minimization Measures are included to ensure incorporation of the NPDES permits during final design of the project.</p> <p>With Minimization Measure WQ-1, the City of Lake Elsinore shall comply with the provisions of the Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002, and any subsequent permit or individual permit if required by the Santa Ana RWQCB as they relate to construction activities for the project including dewatering. This shall include a Notification of Intent (NOI) to the RWQCB at least 30 days prior to the start of construction, preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and a Notice of Termination to the Santa Ana RWQCB upon completion of construction and stabilization of the site.</p> <p>Under Minimization Measure WQ-2, the City shall comply with the provisions of the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003. The City shall follow the procedures outlined in the Storm Water Quality Handbooks, Project Planning and Design Guide, for implementing Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the project. This shall include coordination with the Santa Ana RWQCB with respect to feasibility, maintenance, and monitoring of Treatment BMPs as set forth in Caltrans' Statewide Storm Water Management Plan.</p> <p>Minimization Measure WQ-3 stipulates that the City shall comply with the provisions of the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District NPDES Permit Order No. R8-2013-0024, NPDES No. CAS 618033, and any subsequent permit or individual permit if required by the RWQCB as they relate to post-construction and operational activities. The City shall prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan in compliance with the NPDES Permit requirements.</p> <p>When BMPs are implemented in accordance with NPDES Permit requirements, as stipulated in these minimization measures, operation of the project would not result in adverse impacts to water quality.</p>

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Ms. Marie Petry
February 8, 2017
Page 2

B

4. If during construction/demolition of the project, soil and/or groundwater contamination is suspected, construction/demolition in the area should cease and appropriate health and safety procedures should be implemented. If it is determined that contaminated soil and/or groundwater exist, the ND should identify how any required investigation and/or remediation will be conducted, and the appropriate government agency to provide regulatory oversight.

B-4

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (714) 484-5476 or email at Johnson.Abraham@dtsc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Johnson P. Abraham
Project Manager
Brownfields Restoration and School Evaluation Branch
Brownfields and Environmental Restoration Program - Cypress

kl/sh/ja

cc: See next page.

Comment	Response
B-4	<p>Section 2.14 of this Final IS/EA, Hazardous Waste and Materials, includes minimization measures to address potential contamination of soil and/or groundwater. As outlined in Minimization Measure HAZ-1, If contaminants are determined to be present during the site investigations, the City Project Manager, in consultation with the Contract Qualified Engineer/Geologist, may determine that one or more of the following specialized reports may be necessary: Remedial Actions Options Report, Soil Management Plan, Sensitive Receptor Survey, Human Health/Ecological Risk Assessment, and/or Quarterly Monitoring Report.</p> <p>These reports will be submitted to the Caltrans District 8 Hazardous Waste Coordinator, as well as to the applicable oversight agency for review and approval of areas within State right-of-way.</p>

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No comments.

B

Ms. Marie Petry
February 8, 2017
Page 3

cc: Governor's Office of Planning and Research (via e-mail)
State Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, California 95812-3044
State.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

Ms. Ati Eskandari
City of Lake Elsinore
130 South Main Street
Lake Elsinore, California 92530
ae@s-ces.com

Mr. Alex Menor
Riverside County Transportation Commission
Riverside, California 92501
amenor@rctc.org

Mr. Guenther W. Moskat, Chief (via e-mail)
Planning and Environmental Analysis Section
CEQA Tracking Center
Department of Toxic Substances Control
Guenther.Moskat@dtsc.ca.gov

Mr. Dave Kereazis (via e-mail)
Office of Planning & Environmental Analysis
Department of Toxic Substances Control
Dave.Kereazis@dtsc.ca.gov

Mr. Shahir Haddad, Chief (via e-mail)
Schools Evaluation and Brownfields Cleanup
Brownfields and Environmental Restoration Program - Cypress
Shahir.Haddad@dtsc.ca.gov

CEQA# 2017011018

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C

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA. 94607-4052



FEMA

January 19, 2017

Marie Petry, Senior Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation, District 8
464 West 4th Street, MS 821
San Bernardino, California 92401

Dear Ms. Petry:

This is in response to your request for comments regarding the 08 RIV 15 P 18.3/21.0 Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Improvement Project EA 08 0A4400/PN 088000016 in Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California.

Please review the current effective countywide Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the County of Riverside (Community Number 060245), Maps revised August 18, 2014 and City of Lake Elsinore (Community Number 060636), Maps revised August 28, 2008. Please note that the City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County, California is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The minimum, basic NFIP floodplain management building requirements are described in Vol. 44 Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR), Sections 59 through 65.

A summary of these NFIP floodplain management building requirements are as follows:

- All buildings constructed within a riverine floodplain, (i.e., Flood Zones A, AO, AH, AE, and A1 through A30 as delineated on the FIRM), must be elevated so that the lowest floor is at or above the Base Flood Elevation level in accordance with the effective Flood Insurance Rate Map.
- If the area of construction is located within a Regulatory Floodway as delineated on the FIRM, any *development* must not increase base flood elevation levels. **The term *development* means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings, other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations, and storage of equipment or materials.** A hydrologic and hydraulic analysis must be performed *prior* to the start of development, and must demonstrate that the development would not cause any rise in base flood levels. No rise is permitted within regulatory floodways.

www.fema.gov

Comment	Response
C-1	<p>Section 2.10.2, Affected Environment, on page 2.10-1, in this Final IS/EA, indicates that FIRM maps dated August 28, 2008, the most recently available FIRM maps, were reviewed for the project.</p> <p>Refer to the Response to Comments C-2 through C-5, below, for discussion regarding the NFIP floodplain management building requirements.</p>
C-2	<p>The project is a roadway infrastructure project that does not include the construction of any buildings. Therefore, the NFIP building requirement to locate the lowest floor of buildings at or above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) is not applicable to the project.</p>
C-3	<p>As described in Section 2.10.2 of this Final IS/EA, Affected Environment, and in Section 2.10, Hydrology and Floodplains, a project segment of I-15 from the San Jacinto River to north of the existing Franklin Street overcrossing is in Zone A of the 100-year floodplain (Wash “D”), which represents that no Base Flood Elevations have been determined. There is no planned construction work within the San Jacinto River. As identified in the <i>Floodplain Evaluation Report Summary</i> (July 2010), there would be no significant floodplain-related risks to life or property associated with implementation of the project. In addition, the <i>Location Hydraulic Study</i> (July 2010) concluded that there was a low flooding risk associated with all Build Alternatives. The Conceptual Drainage Analysis determined that the project would not adversely affect local drainage facilities and that the City’s storm drain system could accommodate the increase in storm flows from the project.</p> <p>The project would require modifications to the existing local drainage structures, but would not alter the existing drainage pattern of downstream areas or lead to downstream flooding. There are no substantial floodplain-related risks to life or property associated with implementation of the project. In addition, the project would not promote incompatible floodplain development.</p>
C-4	<p>A <i>Location Hydraulics Study</i> was prepared for the project as described in Section 2.10.3.2 of this Final IS/EA, Permanent Impacts, and in Section 2.10, Hydrology and Floodplains. Those studies concluded that there was a low flooding risk associated with the Build Alternatives. The Conceptual Drainage Analysis determined that the project would not adversely affect local drainage facilities and that the City’s storm drain system could accommodate the increase in storm flows from the project.</p> <p>Refer also to Response to Comment C-3, above, for discussion regarding BFEs.</p>

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C

Marie Petry, Senior Environmental Planner
Page 2
January 19, 2017

- Upon completion of any development that changes existing Special Flood Hazard Areas, the NFIP directs all participating communities to submit the appropriate hydrologic and hydraulic data to FEMA for a FIRM revision. In accordance with 44 CFR, Section 65.3, as soon as practicable, but not later than six months after such data becomes available, a community shall notify FEMA of the changes by submitting technical data for a flood map revision. To obtain copies of FEMA’s Flood Map Revision Application Packages, please refer to the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/forms.shtm>.


C-5

Please Note:

Many NFIP participating communities have adopted floodplain management building requirements which are more restrictive than the minimum federal standards described in 44 CFR. Please contact the local community’s floodplain manager for more information on local floodplain management building requirements. The Lake Elsinore floodplain manager can be reached by calling Rita Thompson, Senior Engineering Technician, at (951) 674-3124. The Riverside County floodplain manager can be reached by calling Deborah de Chambeau, Senior Civil Engineer, at (951) 955-1265.

C-6

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Frank Mansell of the Mitigation staff at (510) 627-7191.

Sincerely,

Gregor Blackburn, CFM, Branch Chief
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch

cc:
Rita Thompson, Senior Engineering Technician, City of Lake Elsinore
Deborah de Chambeau, Senior Civil Engineer, Riverside County
Garret Tam Sing/Salomon Miranda, State of California, Department of Water Resources,
Southern Region Office
Frank Mansell, NFIP Compliance Officer, DHS/FEMA Region IX
Alessandro Amaglio, Environmental Officer, DHS/FEMA Region IX

www.fema.gov

Comment	Response
C-5	It is not anticipated that development would result in map revisions to FEMA flood map revisions. Refer to the Responses to Comments C-3 and C-4, above, for discussion regarding increasing BFE levels in Regulatory Floodways as delineated on a FIRM and for hydrologic and hydraulic study conclusions.
C-6	The local floodplain manager, the Lake Elsinore City Engineer, was contacted on April 19, 2017, and advised that the project is outside of the floodplain.

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CAL FIRE – RIVERSIDE UNIT
RIVERSIDE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

John R. Hawkins - Fire Chief
210 West San Jacinto Avenue, Perris, Ca 92570-1915
Bus: (951) 940-6900 Fax: (951) 940-6373 www.rvcfire.org

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MARION ASHLEY
DISTRICT 5

February 4, 2017

California Dept. of Transportation, District 8
Division of Environmental Planning
Marie Petry, Senior Environmental Planner
464 W. Fourth Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Re: Draft Initial Study/Environmental Assessment 08-RIV-15, Interstate
15 Railroad Canyon Improvement Project EA 08-OA4400/PN 080000016

Dear Ms. Petry,

Thank you for providing the Riverside County Fire Department the opportunity to review the Draft Initial Study for the Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Improvement project.

The following comments reflect the construction phase of the project.

The proposed project will add to the cumulative adverse effect on the Fire Department's ability to maintain the current level of service. These impacts include fire and medical emergencies as well as public service calls, all due to the increased presence of road maintenance vehicles and potential traffic congestion.

Construction activities could result in traffic delays that could affect the ability of fire and emergency service units to meet response time goals within the project area.

The risk of wildfires would increase during construction due to the use of combustion engines in construction equipment, welding equipment, and other sources of combustion. The project area is covered with native and non-native vegetation that is highly flammable during most of the year.

Non-fire related medical emergencies could temporary increase with the presence of construction workers and heavy machinery during construction of the project. Temporary road closures, lane closures, or detour routes may impair response times by the fire department and other emergency service providers.

Mitigation measures should be considered to help reduce these impacts to a level below significance. Please submit a Mitigation Monitoring Plan to the Fire Prevention Bureau.

D

D-1

D-2

D-3

D-4

D-5

Comment

Response

D-1

As documented in Appendix A, CEQA Environmental Checklist, Response VIII.g., and in Section 2.7.3.1 of this Final IS/EA, Temporary Impacts, during construction, some impairment to the delivery of services, including fire and police response times, may occur. However, these temporary impacts would be substantially minimized through the implementation of **Minimization Measure TR-1** (see Section 2.7.4, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures).

TR-1 states that a detailed Transportation Management Plan (TMP) shall be prepared during the final design phase of the project. The objective of the TMP is to minimize the potential impacts that construction activities may have on the traveling public and emergency services providers. Preparation of the TMP shall be coordinated with the emergency services providers in the project vicinity to minimize response delays resulting from traffic delays, temporary ramp and lane closures, and detours during project construction.

Furthermore, no new residential or commercial uses are proposed as part of the project and would not increase the demand for fire protection services.

D-2

Refer to Response to Comment D-1, above, for discussion regarding the project's impacts on fire and emergency response.

D-3

As documented in Appendix A, CEQA Environmental Checklist, Response VIII.h., portions of the project site are identified as being within a "very high" wildfire zone. However, the project site is currently developed with existing highway facilities and access roads. A majority of the project site is currently sparsely vegetated and surrounded by developed commercial and residential uses; however, the potential for wildfires to ignite does exist. Therefore, the following minimization measure has been added to this Final IS/EA in Section 2.6.3, Utilities and Emergency Services Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures, to address the risk of wildfires:

UES-4

Fire Prevention During Construction: Prior to and during any construction activities, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Project Engineer will require the construction contractor to implement the following measures to minimize the risk of fires during construction:

- Coordinate with the applicable local fire department to identify and maintain defensible spaces around active construction areas.
- Coordinate with the applicable local fire department to identify and maintain firefighting equipment (extinguishers, shovels, and water tankers) in active construction areas.
- Prohibit the use of mechanized equipment or equipment that could throw off sparks in areas adjacent to open space or undeveloped land.
- Post emergency services phone numbers (fire, emergency medical, and police) in visible locations in all active construction areas.

D-4

Refer to Response to Comment D-1, above, for discussion regarding the project's impacts on fire and emergency response. Compliance with the TMP would minimize response delays resulting from traffic delays, temporary ramp and lane closures, and detours during project construction.

D-5

Refer to Responses to Comments D-1 through D-4, above, for discussion regarding the projects impacts on fire and emergency response and applicable minimization measures.

The Environmental Commitments Record in this Final IS/EA includes a list of all measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate project-related impacts.

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D

Page 2 Draft EA 08-RIV-15

To minimize the risk of wildfire during construction, the construction contractor shall ensure that all construction vehicles are equipped with fire extinguishers and shovels, and that all construction equipment is inspected to ensure compliance with minimum safety standards.

D-6

As with any additional construction within a response area, a “cumulative” increase in requests for service will add to the Fire Department’s ability to provide adequate service.

D-7

Primary and Secondary access points were not provided on the submittal to determine if they will meet Fire’s needs. Fire will need to review any proposed access/road circulation plan.

D-8

In the interest of Public Safety, the project shall provide an Alternate or Secondary Access(s) as stated in the Transportation Department Conditions. Said Alternate or Secondary Access(s) shall have concurrence and approval of both the Transportation and Fire Departments, and shall be maintained throughout any phasing.

D-9

Submit a Traffic Management Plan to the Riverside County Fire Department Planning and Engineering Division for approval.

D-10

The California Fire Code outlines fire protection standards for the safety, health, and welfare of the public. These standards will be enforced by the Fire Chief.

D-11

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (951) 940-6372 or e-mail at jason.neuman@fire.ca.gov.

Sincerely,
Jason Neuman
Division Chief
Strategic Planning Division

Comment	Response
D-6	The construction contract for this project will direct that CalFire’s request in this regard will be implemented.
D-7	<p>The project does not include the construction of structures or features or changes in operation that would increase demand on fire protection services for the project site or area. However, temporary road closures during construction may affect emergency response times. In addition, construction activities may increase fire risks or increase the need for emergency response if there is an accident on the construction site. Adherence to Minimization Measure TR-1 would minimize the potential impacts that construction activities may have on emergency services providers.</p> <p>Minimization Measure TR-1 states that a detailed TMP shall be prepared during the final design phase of the project. The objective of the TMP is to minimize the potential impacts that construction activities may have on the traveling public and emergency services providers. Preparation of the TMP shall be coordinated with the emergency services providers in the project vicinity to minimize response delays resulting from traffic delays, temporary ramp and lane closures, and detours during project construction.</p>
D-8	No new residential, commercial, or industrial structures are proposed with the project. The project is a roadway infrastructure project that does not include new access points similar to new residential, commercial, or industrial developments.
D-9	Please refer to Response to Comment D-8, above.
D-10	As stated in Minimization Measure TR-1 , preparation of the TMP will be coordinated with the emergency services providers in the project vicinity to minimize response delays resulting from traffic delays, temporary ramp and lane closures, and detours during project construction.
D-11	The project will remain compliant with all applicable California Fire Code standards.

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PECHANGA TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Temecula Band of Luiseño Mission Indians

Post Office, Box 2183 • Temecula, CA 92593
Telephone (951) 308-9295 • Fax (951) 506-9491

February 13, 2017

VIA E-MAIL and USPS

Ms. Marie Petry
Sr. Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
Environmental Studies/Support B
464 W. 4th Street, MS 821
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

Re: Pechanga Tribe Comments on the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Interstate 15/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project, City of Lake Elsinore, CA

Dear Ms. Petry:

This comment letter is written on behalf of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians (hereinafter, “the Tribe”), a federally recognized Indian tribe and sovereign government. The Tribe formally requests, pursuant to Public Resources Code §21092.2, to be notified and involved in the entire CEQA environmental review process for the duration of the above referenced project (the “Project”). Please add the Tribe to your distribution list(s) for public notices and circulation of all documents, including environmental review documents, archeological reports, and all documents pertaining to this Project. The Tribe further requests to be directly notified of all public hearings and scheduled approvals concerning this Project. Please also incorporate these comments into the record of approval for this Project.

The Tribe submits these comments concerning the Project's potential impacts to tribal cultural resources in conjunction with the environmental review of the Project and to assist Caltrans in identifying and avoiding and/or mitigating potential impacts to *Atáaxum* (Luiseño) tribal cultural resources (TCLs/TCRs). The Tribe is very disturbed that it was not consulted appropriately under CEQA or Section 106 on the proposed improvements and modifications to the existing Railroad Canyon Interchange and construction of a new interchange at the Franklin Street overcrossing. The entire Project is located within a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) and a Traditional Cultural Landscape, which is a type of Tribal Cultural Resource (AB52). Furthermore, the Franklin Street Interchange is located less than 1.25 miles from one of the oldest villages in southern California, which contains known human remains. We are highly concerned that TCRs may be impacted by the proposed development; however, because we have not had adequate consultation, we cannot support any of the proposed Alternatives nor do we

E

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer:
Gary P. DuBois, JD, MSW

THPO Historian:
Lisa Woodward, Ph.D.

Assistant THPO:
Anna Hoover, RPA

Advisory Review Board:
Mary Bear Magee
Evie Gerber
Darlene Miranda
Richard B. Searce
Bridgette Barcello
Neal Ibanez
Michael Vasquez

E-1

E-2

Comment	Response
E-1	<p>The Tribe's formal request for involvement is acknowledged and, as a result, consultation under Section 106 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52 was conducted on March 1, 2017.</p> <p>The Tribe's request for notifications is acknowledged and will include the Tribe in the distribution of project-related notices and circulation of documents. The comments are incorporated into the record of approval for the project in this Final IS/EA. There are no other substantive statements or questions about this Final IS/EA or analysis therein. Therefore, no further response is required.</p>
E-2	<p>All project-related consultation with the Tribe is documented in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/EA. AB 52 government-to-government consultation was initiated with Tribes that notified Caltrans in writing to consult on any projects within the area of this project on February 9, 2017. All consulting tribes received an AB 52 consultation letter from Caltrans. Consultation under CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA for the IS/EA was completed as of March 31, 2017.</p> <p>The <i>Historic Property Survey Report</i> (HPSR 2011) and the <i>Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report</i> (SHPSR 2015) prepared for the project identifies and documents public participation efforts completed for the project, which included consultation with the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians between September 2009 to March 2011. Consultation under Section 106 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52 was also conducted on March 1, 2017. These studies were performed following published guidance for compliance with State and federal requirements for cultural resource analyses.</p> <p>Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address cultural resources have been identified and included in this Final IS/EA in Section 2.9.4, Cultural Resources, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. Specific measures to address potential impact to TCRs include Minimization Measures CR-3 and CR-4. Consultation will continue during the design and construction phase of the project as described in Minimization Measures CR-3 and CR-4</p> <p>CR-3 Project grading plans shall be provided to the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians for review prior to any ground-disturbing activities within native soils. The need for Native American monitoring of ground-disturbing activities within native soils shall be evaluated and agreed to by the Caltrans District 8 Native American Coordinator, tribal representatives, a qualified archaeological monitor, and the City's Public Works Director, or designee.</p> <p>CR-4 Prior to the start of any ground-disturbing activities, a Monitoring and Discovery Plan shall be prepared. The Monitoring and Discover Plan will define the monitoring protocol and the procedures for addressing the discovery of cultural resources and/or tribal cultural resources.</p> <p>If cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered during disturbances in native soils, the qualified archaeological monitor shall be empowered to redirect construction away from the area of the find in order to assess its significance.</p> <p>At the time of the assessment, the qualified archaeological monitor may require the initiation of an archaeological testing program that would include the recordation of artifacts and controlled removal of the materials, as well as sampling of the area surrounding the find to delineate its horizontal and vertical extent. If the find is determined to be significant or is a unique archaeological and/or tribal cultural resource, a data recovery program shall be conducted to recover an adequate sample from the site to mitigate any impacts by the project.</p> <p>At the completion of all disturbances within native soils during project construction, the archaeological monitor shall provide a report documenting the monitoring conducted on the site, including a discussion of any cultural and/or tribal cultural resources encountered during construction, how those resources were addressed and documented, any data recovery program, and where any artifacts were curated.</p>

Sacred Is The Duty Trusted Unto Our Care And With Honor We Rise To The Need

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E

Pechanga Comment Letter to Caltrans
Re: Pechanga Tribe Comments on the IS/MND for Railroad Cyn Interchange
February 13, 2017
Page 2

concur that direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to cultural resources will be less than significant with the inadequate mitigation measures provided in the document. As such, it is the Pechanga Tribe's position that this MND does not meet standard requirements for cultural resources impact analysis and may not meet CEQA and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 process requirements for environmental review. Without consultation prior to finalization of the document, Caltrans is in danger of putting itself in a position of adopting inadequate mitigation as the efforts to identify TCRs/TCLs and Historic Properties has not adequately occurred; further, without consultation prior to finalization of the mitigation measures, Pechanga is unable to meaningfully participate in the CEQA/Section 106 process.

E-2

THE CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE & CALTRANS MUST INCLUDE INVOLVEMENT OF AND CONSULTATION WITH THE PECHANGA TRIBE IN ITS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS UNDER THE AB 52 AMENDMENT TO CEQA AND PER 36 CFR 800

It has been the intent of the Federal Government¹ and the State of California² that Indian tribes be consulted with regard to issues which impact cultural and spiritual resources, as well as other governmental concerns. The responsibility to consult with Indian tribes stems from the unique government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian tribes. This arises when tribal interests are affected by the actions of governmental agencies and departments. In this case, it is undisputed that the project lies within the Pechanga Tribe's traditional territory. Therefore, in order to comply with CEQA, the NHPA Section 106 process and other applicable Federal and California law, it is imperative that the City of Lake Elsinore and Caltrans consult with the Tribe in order to guarantee an adequate knowledge base for an appropriate evaluation of the Project effects, as well as generating adequate mitigation measures.

E-3

On September 25, 2014, the Governor signed AB 52, legislation that amends the California Environmental Quality Act. See Public Resources Code §§ 5097.94, 21073, 21074, 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3, 21083.09, 21084.2, and 21084.3. AB 52 applies to projects that have a notice of preparation for an environmental impact report, negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration filed on or after July 1, 2015. The law now requires tribal consultation by cities, counties, and other CEQA lead agencies and an evaluation of a new environmental category, "tribal cultural resources," which acknowledge and take into account the resources' tribal values rather than focusing purely on the scientific or academic value of the resources.

¹See e.g., Executive Memorandum of April 29, 1994 on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, Executive Order of November 6, 2000 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, Executive Memorandum of September 23, 2004 on Government-to-Government Relationships with Tribal Governments, and Executive Memorandum of November 5, 2009 on Tribal Consultation.

² See California Public Resource Code §5097.9 et seq.; California Government Code §§65351, 65352.3 and 65352.4

*Pechanga Cultural Resources • Temecula Band of Luiseño Mission Indians
Post Office Box 2183 • Temecula, CA 92592*

Sacred Is The Duty Trusted Unto Our Care And With Honor We Rise To The Need

Comment	Response
E-2	Please refer to Response to Comment E-2, above.
E-3	Please refer to Response to Comment E-2, above in regards to tribal consultation and compliance with CEQA, Section 106 of the NHPA, and other applicable State and federal laws. The Tribe's request for including an evaluation of the project's potential to affect TCRs is acknowledged. Section 2.9.3.1 (Cultural Resources) of this Final IS/EA, includes an evaluation and discussion of the project's effect on TCRs.

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E

Pechanga Comment Letter to Caltrans
Re: Pechanga Tribe Comments on the IS/MND for Railroad Cyn Interchange
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Page 3

AB 52 establishes a government-to-government process between a tribe and a lead agency, including a specific consultation process with California Native American tribes concerning potential impacts to tribal cultural resources. AB 52 also recognizes that tribes may have expertise regarding their culture and history and requires the consideration of the tribal values inherent in cultural resources to provide a complete understanding of their nature and the significance of the potential impacts. The law further added new substantive considerations concerning significant impacts, when a CEQA document may be certified or adopted, what findings/elements are to be included in a CEQA document concerning tribal cultural resources, and appropriate mitigation for impacts to tribal cultural resources. If this Project is subject to AB 52, Pechanga requests that the environmental documents be updated to address these new regulations and include the Tribe’s concerns, which includes the tribal values of the area.

E-3

PECHANGA CULTURAL AFFILIATION TO PROJECT AREA

The Pechanga Tribe asserts that the Project area is part of ‘Atáaxum (Luiseño), and therefore the Tribe’s, aboriginal territory as evidenced by the existence of place names, *tóota yixélval* (rock art, pictographs, petroglyphs), documented archaeological items, villages and a traditional cultural landscape, which are types of tribal cultural resources, and a Traditional Cultural Property within and in the vicinity of the Project. This culturally sensitive area is affiliated with the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians because of the Tribe’s cultural ties to this area as well as extensive history with both this Project and other projects within the area. Pechanga is also the closest Tribe to the project with Federal Reservation lands less than 3.5 miles away.

The Tribe’s knowledge of our ancestral boundaries is based on reliable information passed down to us from our elders; published academic works in the areas of anthropology, history and ethno-history; and through recorded ethnographic and linguistic accounts. Of the many anthropologists and historians who have presented boundaries of the Luiseño traditional territory, none have excluded the Lake Elsinore area from their descriptions (Sparkman 1908; Kroeber 1925; White 1963; Harvey 1974; Oxendine 1983; Smith and Freers 1994), and such territory descriptions correspond almost identically with what was communicated to the Pechanga people by our elders.

E-4

There is a connection between Temecula and Lake Elsinore area that stems from the beginning of time for Pechanga people. Luiseño history originates with the creation of all things at *éxva Teméeku*, known today as the City of Temecula, and dispersing out to all corners of creation (what is today known as Luiseño territory). The name *éxva* can be translated as a “place of sand” and *Teméeku* means “sun place.” Temecula derives its etymology from this place, where the Murrieta and Temecula Creeks converge to form the Santa Margarita River which flows onto the Pacific Ocean. This location is integral to Luiseño cultural history and heritage.

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Comment	Response
E-3	Please refer to Response to Comment E-3, above.
E-4	There are no substantive statements or questions about this Final IS/EA or analysis therein. Therefore, no response is required.

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Comment	Response
E-4	Please refer to Response to Comment E-4, above.

E

Pechanga Comment Letter to Caltrans
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In many of the creation songs, Temecula and Elsinore are mentioned interchangeably, intimating a relationship between Temecula and Elsinore, including the entire area in between. It was at Temecula that the first human, *Wuyóot*, lived, fed and taught the people and here that he became sick. Several of our traditional songs relate the account of the people taking the dying *Wuyóot* to various hot springs, which included *Churúkumuknu Sákiwuna* (sliding place where hot water bubbles)--Murrieta Hot Springs and *'iténgvu Wumówmu*--Lake Elsinore, where he died. As he journeyed to these various springs, *Wuyóot* also named the increments of time that had passed, which became the months of the Luiseño calendar. During this time, he taught the First People all of his knowledge (DuBois 1908; Roberts 1933, 6-7). It is the Luiseño creation account that connects Elsinore to Temecula, and thus to the Temecula people who were evicted and moved to the Pechanga Reservation, and now known as the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Mission Indians (the Pechanga Tribe).

The area known as Lake Elsinore is also the location for noteworthy events in Luiseño culture. For example, it is the place where two of the *Káamalam* (first people), *Qáwqaw* and *Chixéemal*, had their first menses, which is the subject of one of the girls' coming-of-age songs (DuBois 1908). Another song recounts the travels of the people to Elsinore after a great flood (DuBois 1908). From here, they again spread out to the north, south, east and west. Three songs, called *Moniivol*, are songs of the places and landmarks that were destinations of the Luiseño ancestors. They describe the exact route of the Temecula (Pechanga) people and the landmarks made by each to claim title to places in their migrations (DuBois 1908:110). Another account involves a Temecula village leader killing the evil *Táakwish* (the Luiseño evil spirit) at Elsinore, followed by his cremation in Temescal Canyon (Kroeber 1906).

Tóota yixelval (rock art) is also an important element in the determination of Luiseño territorial boundaries. *Tóota yixelval* can consist of petroglyphs (incised) elements, or pictographs (painted) elements. The science of archaeology tells us that places can be described through these elements. Riverside and Northern San Diego Counties are home to red-pigmented pictograph panels. Archaeologists have adopted the name for these pictograph-versions, as defined by Ken Hedges of the Museum of Man, as the San Luis Rey style. The San Luis Rey style incorporates elements which include chevrons, zig-zags, dot patterns, sunbursts, handprints, net/chain, anthropomorphic (human-like) and zoomorphic (animal-like) designs. Tribal historians and photographs inform us that some design elements are reminiscent of Luiseño ground paintings. A few of these design elements, particularly the flower motifs, the net/chain and zig-zags, were sometimes depicted in Luiseño basket designs and can be observed in remaining baskets and textiles today.

An additional type of *tóota yixelval*, identified by archaeologists also as rock art or petroglyphs, are cupules. Throughout Luiseño territory, there are certain types of large boulders, taking the shape of mushrooms or waves, which contain numerous small pecked and ground indentations, or cupules. Many of these cupule boulders have been identified within a few miles of the Project. Additionally, according to historian Constance DuBois:

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When the people scattered from Ekvo Temeko, Temecula, they were very powerful. When they got to a place, they would sing a song to make water come there, and would call that place theirs; or they would scoop out a hollow in a rock with their hands to have that for their mark as a claim upon the land. The different parties of people had their own marks. For instance, Albañas's ancestors had theirs, and Lucario's people had theirs, and their own songs of Munival to tell how they traveled from Temecula, of the spots where they stopped and about the different places they claimed (1908:158).

Thus, our songs and stories, as well as academic works, demonstrate that the *Atáaxum* people who occupied what we know today as Temecula, Lake Elsinore and the areas in between (*Páayaxchi*, *Nivé'wuna*, *Páa'u*, *Páašukwa*, *Píi'iv*, *Pívmay*, *We'éeva*, *Wiina* and *Temeeku*) are ancestors of the present-day Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, and as such, Pechanga is the appropriate culturally affiliated tribe for projects that impact this geographic area.

In addition, the Pechanga Tribe has a long modern day history of involvement with Projects in the area known as Lake Elsinore. Not only has the Pechanga Tribe been involved, but it has been given the designation of the consulting tribe or affiliated tribe on projects located in the City of Lake Elsinore and its sphere of influence, such as Cottonwood Hills, Liberty Serenity, North Peak, Temescal Canyon, Lakeview Villas, County Sheriff's Station, Spy Glass Ranch, Meadowbrook, Oak Springs, Canyon Hills, Wasson West, Greenwald Property, Lake Street Marketplace and Glen Ivy. In addition, Pechanga was the consulting tribe on the projects which have been developed within the overarching East Lake/Liberty Specific Plan such as the Laing/Summerly, Waterbury and the Marina District Specific Plan. Moreover, the Pechanga Tribe has been the only tribe that we know of to assume the role of MLD in the Lake Elsinore area. NAHC records confirm that no other tribe has been named MLD in the Lake Elsinore area.

The Tribe would welcome to opportunity to meet with the City and Caltrans to further explain and provide documentation concerning our specific cultural affiliation to lands within your jurisdiction.

PROJECT IMPACTS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES

The proposed Project is on land that is within the traditional territory of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians. Pechanga is not opposed to this Project and in fact, encourages the improvement of the City's infrastructure. However, the Tribe's primary concerns stem from the Project's proposed impacts on Native American cultural resources, inadequate mitigation measures and the lack of tribal consultation during the CEQA process. The Tribe is concerned about both the protection of unique and irreplaceable cultural resources, such as Luiseño village sites, sacred sites and archaeological items which would be displaced by ground disturbing work on the Project, on the proper and lawful treatment of cultural items, Native American human

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E

E-4

E-5

E-6

Comment	Response
E-4	Please refer to Response to Comment E-4, above.
E-5	Please refer to Response to Comment E-2, above.
E-6	Please refer to Response to Comment E-2 and E-5, above. Adequacy of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures has been discussed during consultation and refinements to avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address cultural resources were identified and included in this Final IS/EA. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address cultural resources have been identified and included in this Final IS/EA in Section 2.9.4, Cultural Resources, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. Specific measures to address potential impact to TCRs include Minimization Measures CR-3 and CR-4 .

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remains and sacred items likely to be discovered in the course of the work, and on the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to the TCP and the landscape.

Development of this Project area will have both direct and indirect impacts, resulting in a significant impact to cultural resources. The Tribe will continue to be involved and to participate with the City and Caltrans in developing all monitoring and mitigation plans and measures for the duration of the Project. In addition, given the sensitivity of the Project area and the prior history of the Tribe with the City and this area, it is the position of the Pechanga Tribe that Pechanga tribal monitors be required to be present during all ground-disturbing activities conducted in connection with the Project, including any additional archeological excavations performed.

PROJECT MITIGATION MEASURES

Because adequate and appropriate consultation *has not* occurred for this Project, Pechanga cannot provide mitigation measures at this time. However, the two minimal measures provided in the IS/MND are not adequate to mitigate the impacts to the TCP nor do they provide any sensitivity to the potential impacts that can occur to archaeological and tribal cultural resources. As stated above, consultation must occur prior to finalizing the IS/MND and must be amended to address tribal values and concerns.

The Tribe reserves the right to fully participate in the environmental review process, as well as to provide further comment on the Project's impacts to cultural resources and potential mitigation for such impacts.

The Pechanga Tribe looks forward to working together with Caltrans and the City of Lake Elsinore in protecting the invaluable Pechanga cultural resources found in the Project area. Please contact me at 951-770-8104 or at ahoover@pechanga-nsn.gov once you have had a chance to review these comments so that we can schedule a face to face consultation. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Anna Hoover
Deputy THPO
Cultural Analyst

Cc Pechanga Office of the General Counsel

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Comment	Response
E-6	Please refer to Response to Comment E-6, above.
E-7	Please refer to Response to Comments E-2, above.
E-8	Please refer to Response to Comments E-2, above.

E-6


E-7

E-8

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION
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Website: <http://www.nahc.ca.gov>
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Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor



February 2, 2017

Marie Petry
California Department of Transportation, District 8
464 West 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

sent via e-mail:
marie.petry@dot.ca.gov

Re: SCH# 2017011018, Interstate 15/ Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project, Community of Lake Elsinore;
Riverside County, California

Dear Ms. Petry:

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) has reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared for the project referenced above. The review included the Project Description/Introduction, the Environmental Checklist, section V Cultural Resources, and the Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures section 2.9 Cultural Resources prepared by the California Department of Transportation. We have the following concerns:

- There is no Tribal Cultural Resources section or subsection in the Executive Summary as per California Natural Resources Agency (2016) "Final Text for tribal cultural resources update to Appendix G: Environmental Checklist Form," <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/ab52/Clean-final-AB-52-App-G-text-Submitted.pdf>
 - There are no mitigation measures specifically addressing Tribal Cultural Resources separately. Mitigation measures must take Tribal Cultural Resources into consideration as required under AB-52, **with or without consultation** occurring. Mitigation language for archaeological resources is not always appropriate for or similar to measures specifically for handling Tribal Cultural Resources.
 - There is no documentation of **government-to-government consultation by the lead agency** under AB-52 with Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area as required by statute, or that mitigation measures were developed in consultation with the tribes. Discussions under AB-52 may include the type of document prepared and proposed mitigation. Contact by consultants during the cultural resources assessment is not government-to-government consultation.
 - Cultural Resources assessments are out of date (2011). These should adequately assess the existence and significance of tribal cultural resources and plan for avoidance, preservation in place, or barring both, mitigation of project-related impacts to tribal cultural resources.
- F-1

F-2

F-3

F-4

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)¹, specifically Public Resources Code section 21084.1, states that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.² If there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before a lead agency, that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, an environmental impact report (EIR) shall be prepared.³ In order to determine whether a project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, a lead agency will need to determine whether there are historical resources with the area of project effect (APE).

CEQA was amended in 2014 by Assembly Bill 52. (AB 52).⁴ **AB 52 applies to any project for which a notice of preparation or a notice of negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2015.** AB 52 created a separate category for "tribal cultural resources"⁵, that now includes "a project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment."⁶ Public agencies shall, when feasible, avoid damaging effects to any tribal cultural resource.⁷ Your project may also be subject to

¹ Pub. Resources Code § 21000 et seq.
² Pub. Resources Code § 21084.1; Cal. Code Regs., tit.14, § 15064.5 (b); CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (b)
³ Pub. Resources Code § 21080 (d); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15064 subd.(a)(1); CEQA Guidelines § 15064 (a)(1)
⁴ Government Code 65352.3
⁵ Pub. Resources Code § 21074
⁶ Pub. Resources Code § 21084.2
⁷ Pub. Resources Code § 21084.3 (a)

Comment	Response
F-1	There is no executive summary in the environmental document. The CEQA Environmental Checklist is included in Appendix A of this Final IS/EA. Each applicable Section of this Final IS/EA provides the corresponding CEQA discussion per environmental topic area. The updated current CEQA Environmental Checklist (Appendix A of this Final IS/EA), including TCRs, is included. TCRs are specifically addressed in Section 2.9.3.1 (Cultural Resources) of this Final IS/EA.
F-2	All project-related consultation with the Tribe is documented in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/EA. AB 52 government-to-government consultation was initiated with Tribes that notified Caltrans in writing to consult on any projects within the area of this project on February 9, 2017. All consulting tribes received an AB 52 consultation letter from Caltrans. Consultation under CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA for the IS/EA was completed as of March 31, 2017. The <i>Historic Property Survey Report</i> (HPSR 2011) and the <i>Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report</i> (SHPSR 2015) prepared for the project identify and document public participation efforts completed for the project, which included consultation with the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians from September 2009 to March 2011. Consultation under Section 106 and AB 52 was also conducted on March 1, 2017. These studies were performed following published guidance for compliance with State and federal requirements for cultural resource analyses. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address cultural resources have been identified and included in this Final IS/EA in Section 2.9.4, Cultural Resources, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. Specific measures to address potential impact to TCRs include Minimization Measures CR-3 and CR-4 . Consultation will continue during the design and construction phase of the project as described in Minimization Measures CR-3 and CR-4 . CR-3 Project grading plans shall be provided to the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians and the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians for review prior to any ground-disturbing activities within native soils. The need for Native American monitoring of ground-disturbing activities within native soils shall be evaluated and agreed to by the Caltrans District 8 Native American Coordinator, tribal representatives, a qualified archaeological monitor, and the City's Public Works Director, or designee. CR-4 Prior to the start of any ground-disturbing activities, a Monitoring and Discovery Plan shall be prepared. The Monitoring and Discover Plan will define the monitoring protocol and the procedures for addressing the discovery of cultural resources and/or tribal cultural resources. If cultural resources or tribal cultural resources are encountered during disturbances in native soils, the qualified archaeological monitor shall be empowered to redirect construction away from the area of the find in order to assess its significance. At the time of the assessment, the qualified archaeological monitor may require the initiation of an archaeological testing program that would include the recordation of artifacts and controlled removal of the materials, as well as sampling of the area surrounding the find to delineate its horizontal and vertical extent. If the find is determined to be significant or is a unique archaeological and/or tribal cultural resource, a data recovery program shall be conducted to recover an adequate sample from the site to mitigate any impacts by the project. At the completion of all disturbances within native soils during project construction, the archaeological monitor shall provide a report documenting the monitoring conducted on the site, including a discussion of any cultural and/or tribal cultural resources encountered during construction, how those resources were addressed and documented, any data recovery program, and where any artifacts were curated.
F-3	Good faith government-to-government consultation under Section 106 took place pre-AB 52 compliance and is documented in Chapter 3 of this Final IS/EA. AB 52 is triggered with the publication of a Notice of Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration after July 1, 2015. AB 52 government-to-government consultation was initiated with Tribes that notified Caltrans in writing to consult on any projects within the area of this project on February 9, 2017. All consulting tribes received an AB 52 consultation letter from Caltrans. Consultation under Section 106 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52 was conducted on March 1, 2017.
F-4	The project Area of Potential Effect (APE) has been surveyed on multiple occasions and all cultural resources identified. The APE is extensively disturbed and over 50% developed (recently) with the majority of development in the eastern half of the APE in greater proximity to the San Jacinto River. Given proximity to the river in the eastern portion of the APE, this portion is of higher sensitivity archaeologically; however, as stated before, this portion is almost completely developed. The western half of the APE (less archaeological sensitivity) is disturbed by off-road vehicle activities. The likelihood of observing previously unrecorded resources within the APE, including historic built-environment, is negligible. Therefore, a new (additional) survey of the APE would not result in substantial new information. While a new survey is not warranted, monitoring is recommended during construction. While the cultural resources assessments (archaeology and historic built environment) remain valid based on the information provided above, AB 52 consultation establishes the presence or absence of TCRs. AB 52, and the consultation requirement including identifying TCRs, was initiated by Caltrans on February 9, 2017. Consultation under CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA for the project is complete. Mitigation measures for TCRs have been added into this Final IS/EA in Section 2.9.3.1 (Cultural Resources).

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No comments.

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Senate Bill 18 (SB 18) (Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004), Government Code 65352.3, if it also involves the adoption of or amendment to a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation or proposed designation of open space. **Both SB 18 and AB 52 have tribal consultation requirements.** Additionally, if your project is also subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) (NEPA), the tribal consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966⁸ may also apply.

Consult your legal counsel about compliance with AB 52 and SB 18 as well as compliance with any other applicable laws.

Agencies should be aware that AB 52 does not preclude agencies from initiating tribal consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with their jurisdictions before the timeframes provided in AB 52. For that reason, we urge you to continue to request Native American Tribal Consultation Lists and Sacred Lands File searches from the NAHC. The request forms can be found online at: <http://nahc.ca.gov/resources/forms/>. Additional information regarding AB 52 can be found online at http://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AB52TribalConsultation_CalEPAPDF.pdf, entitled "Tribal Consultation Under AB 52: Requirements and Best Practices".

The NAHC recommends lead agencies consult with all California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of your proposed project as early as possible in order to avoid inadvertent discoveries of Native American human remains and best protect tribal cultural resources.

A brief summary of portions of AB 52 and SB 18 as well as the NAHC's recommendations for conducting cultural resources assessments is also attached.

Please contact me at gayle.totton@nahc.ca.gov or call (916) 373-3710 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Gayle Totton, B.S., M.A., Ph.D
Associate Governmental Project Analyst

Attachment

cc: State Clearinghouse

⁸ 154 U.S.C. 300101, 36 C.F.R. § 800 et seq.

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No comments.

F

Pertinent Statutory Information:

Under AB 52:

AB 52 has added to CEQA the additional requirements listed below, along with many other requirements:
Within fourteen (14) days of determining that an application for a project is complete or of a decision by a public agency to undertake a project, a **lead agency** shall provide formal notification to a designated contact of, or tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice.
A **lead agency** shall begin the consultation process within 30 days of receiving a request for consultation from a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project,⁹ and **prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration or environmental impact report.** For purposes of AB 52, "consultation shall have the same meaning as provided in Gov. Code § 65352.4 (SB 18)."¹⁰
The following topics of consultation, if a tribe requests to discuss them, are mandatory topics of consultation:

- a. Alternatives to the project.
 - b. Recommended mitigation measures.
 - c. Significant effects.¹¹
1. The following topics are discretionary topics of consultation:
- a. Type of environmental review necessary.
 - b. Significance of the tribal cultural resources.
 - c. Significance of the project's impacts on tribal cultural resources.

If necessary, project alternatives or appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation that the tribe may recommend to the lead agency.¹²
With some exceptions, any information, including but not limited to, the location, description, and use of tribal cultural resources submitted by a California Native American tribe during the environmental review process **shall not be included in the environmental document or otherwise disclosed by the lead agency or any other public agency to the public, consistent with Government Code sections 6254 (r) and 6254.10.** Any information submitted by a California Native American tribe during the consultation or environmental review process shall be published in a confidential appendix to the environmental document unless the tribe that provided the information consents, in writing, to the disclosure of some or all of the information to the public.¹³
If a project may have a significant impact on a tribal cultural resource, **the lead agency's environmental document shall discuss both of the following:**

- a. Whether the proposed project has a significant impact on an identified tribal cultural resource.
 - b. Whether feasible alternatives or mitigation measures, including those measures that may be agreed to pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21082.3, subdivision (a), avoid or substantially lessen the impact on the identified tribal cultural resource.¹⁴
- Consultation with a tribe shall be considered concluded when either of the following occurs:
- a. The parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a tribal cultural resource; or
 - b. A party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached.¹⁵

Any mitigation measures agreed upon in the consultation conducted pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2 **shall be recommended for inclusion in the environmental document and in an adopted mitigation monitoring and reporting program,** if determined to avoid or lessen the impact pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21082.3, subdivision (b), paragraph 2, and shall be fully enforceable.¹⁶
If mitigation measures recommended by the staff of the lead agency as a result of the consultation process are not included in the environmental document or if there are no agreed upon mitigation measures at the conclusion of consultation, or if consultation does not occur, and if substantial evidence demonstrates that a project will cause a significant effect to a tribal cultural resource, **the lead agency shall consider feasible mitigation** pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21084.3 (b).¹⁷
An environmental impact report **may not be certified,** nor may a mitigated negative declaration or a negative declaration be adopted unless one of the following occurs:

- a. The consultation process between the tribes and the lead agency has occurred as provided in Public Resources Code sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2 and concluded pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.
- b. The tribe that requested consultation failed to provide comments to the lead agency or otherwise failed to engage in the consultation process.

⁹ Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.1, subds. (d) and (e)
¹⁰ Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.1 (b)
¹¹ Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.2 (a)
¹² Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.2 (a)
¹³ Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.2 (a)
¹⁴ Pub. Resources Code § 21082.3 (c)(1)
¹⁵ Pub. Resources Code § 21082.3 (b)
¹⁶ Pub. Resources Code § 21080.3.2 (b)
¹⁷ Pub. Resources Code § 21082.3 (a)

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No comments.

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- c. The lead agency provided notice of the project to the tribe in compliance with Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1 (d) and the tribe failed to request consultation within 30 days.¹⁸
This process should be documented in the Tribal Cultural Resources section of your environmental document.

Under SB 18:

Government Code § 65352.3 (a) (1) requires consultation with Native Americans on general plan proposals for the purposes of "preserving or mitigating impacts to places, features, and objects described § 5097.9 and § 5091.993 of the Public Resources Code that are located within the city or county's jurisdiction. Government Code § 65560 (a), (b), and (c) provides for consultation with Native American tribes on the open-space element of a county or city general plan for the purposes of protecting places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code.

- SB 18 applies to **local governments** and requires them to contact, provide notice to, refer plans to, and consult with tribes prior to the adoption or amendment of a general plan or a specific plan, or the designation of open space. Local governments should consult the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's "Tribal Consultation Guidelines," which can be found online at: https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/09_14_05_Updated_Guidelines_922.pdf
- **Tribal Consultation:** If a local government considers a proposal to adopt or amend a general plan or a specific plan, or to designate open space it is required to contact the appropriate tribes identified by the NAHC by requesting a "Tribal Consultation List." If a tribe, once contacted, requests consultation the local government must consult with the tribe on the plan proposal. **A tribe has 90 days from the date of receipt of notification to request consultation unless a shorter timeframe has been agreed to by the tribe.**¹⁹
- **There is no Statutory Time Limit on Tribal Consultation under the law.**
- **Confidentiality:** Consistent with the guidelines developed and adopted by the Office of Planning and Research,²⁰ the city or county shall protect the confidentiality of the information concerning the specific identity, location, character, and use of places, features and objects described in Public Resources Code sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 that are within the city's or county's jurisdiction.²¹
- **Conclusion Tribal Consultation:** Consultation should be concluded at the point in which:
 - The parties to the consultation come to a mutual agreement concerning the appropriate measures for preservation or mitigation; or
 - Either the local government or the tribe, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached concerning the appropriate measures of preservation or mitigation.²²

NAHC Recommendations for Cultural Resources Assessments:

- Contact the NAHC for:
 - A Sacred Lands File search. Remember that tribes do not always record their sacred sites in the Sacred Lands File, nor are they required to do so. A Sacred Lands File search is not a substitute for consultation with tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the project's APE.
 - A Native American Tribal Contact List of appropriate tribes for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in planning for avoidance, preservation in place, or, failing both, mitigation measures.
 - The request form can be found at <http://nahc.ca.gov/resources/forms/>.
- Contact the appropriate regional California Historical Research Information System (CHRIS) Center (http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1068) for an archaeological records search. The records search will determine:
 - If part or the entire APE has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
 - If any known cultural resources have been already been recorded on or adjacent to the APE.
 - If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
 - If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
- If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
 - The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum and not be made available for public disclosure.
 - The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional CHRIS center.

¹⁸ Pub. Resources Code § 21082.3 (d)
¹⁹ (Gov. Code § 65352.3 (a)(2)).
²⁰ pursuant to Gov. Code section 65040.2,
²¹ (Gov. Code § 65352.3 (b)).
²² (Tribal Consultation Guidelines, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2005) at p. 18).

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No comments.

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Examples of Mitigation Measures That May Be Considered to Avoid or Minimize Significant Adverse Impacts to Tribal Cultural Resources:

- o Avoidance and preservation of the resources in place, including, but not limited to:
 - Planning and construction to avoid the resources and protect the cultural and natural context.
 - Planning greenspace, parks, or other open space, to incorporate the resources with culturally appropriate protection and management criteria.
- o Treating the resource with culturally appropriate dignity, taking into account the tribal cultural values and meaning of the resource, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Protecting the cultural character and integrity of the resource.
 - Protecting the traditional use of the resource.
 - Protecting the confidentiality of the resource.
- o Permanent conservation easements or other interests in real property, with culturally appropriate management criteria for the purposes of preserving or utilizing the resources or places.
- o Please note that a federally recognized California Native American tribe or a non-federally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the NAHC to protect a California prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place may acquire and hold conservation easements if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed.²³
- o Please note that it is the policy of the state that Native American remains and associated grave artifacts shall be repatriated.²⁴

The lack of surface evidence of archaeological resources (including tribal cultural resources) does not preclude their subsurface existence.

- o Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of inadvertently discovered archaeological resources.²⁵ In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American with knowledge of cultural resources should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
- o Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the disposition of recovered cultural items that are not burial associated in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.
- o Lead agencies should include in their mitigation and monitoring reporting program plans provisions for the treatment and disposition of inadvertently discovered Native American human remains. Health and Safety Code section 7050.5, Public Resources Code section 5097.98, and Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, section 15064.5, subdivisions (d) and (e) (CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5, subds. (d) and (e)) address the processes to be followed in the event of an inadvertent discovery of any Native American human remains and associated grave goods in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

²³ (Civ. Code § 815.3 (c)).

²⁴ (Pub. Resources Code § 5097.991).

²⁵ per Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, section 15064.5(f) (CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(f)).

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No comments.



State of California - Natural Resources Agency
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G
EDMUND G. BROWN, Jr., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



February 16, 2017
Sent via email

Ms. Marie Petry
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
Environmental Studies/Support B
464 W. 4th Street, MS 821
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400
marie.petry@dot.ca.gov

Subject: Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration
Interstate 15/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project
State Clearinghouse No. 2017011018

Dear Ms. Petry:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study and proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project (project) [State Clearinghouse No. 2017011018]. We appreciate your willingness to grant the Department a seven-day extension to February 16, 2017 to submit our comments. The Department is responding to the IS/MND as a Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources (California Fish and Game Code Sections 711.7 and 1802, and the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines Section 15386), and as a Responsible Agency regarding any discretionary actions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381), such as the issuance of a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 *et seq.*) and/or a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Permit for Incidental Take of Endangered, Threatened, and/or Candidate species (California Fish and Game Code Sections 2080 and 2080.1).

The project proposes improvements and ramp modifications to the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road interchange and the construction of a new interchange north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing in the City of Lake Elsinore, Riverside County. Three build alternatives are currently contemplated; however no locally preferred alternative has been identified. All build alternatives encompass improvements and ramp modifications to the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road interchange and the construction of a new interchange north of the existing I-15/Franklin Street overcrossing.

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870

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Mitigated Negative Declaration
Interstate 15/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project
SCH No. 2017011018
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COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and the habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (i.e., biological resources); and administers the Natural Community Conservation Planning Program (NCCP Program). The Department offers the comments and recommendations presented below to assist the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans; the CEQA lead agency) in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the project's significant, or potentially significant, impacts on biological resources. The comments and recommendations are also offered to enable the Department to adequately review and comment on the proposed project with respect to impacts on biological resources and the project's consistency with the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

The Department's comments and recommendations on the IS/MND include:

Special Status Plant Species

The IS/MND identifies the presence of suitable vegetation and/or soils for the following species: Chaparral sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa* var. *aruita*), Plummer's mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*), Parry's spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *parryi*), Mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata*), White rabbit tobacco (*Psuedognaphalium leucocephalum*), and Coulter's Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*). However, despite the identification of suitable vegetation and/or soils, focused botanical surveys of the project area were not completed. Instead, the IS/MND concludes that because of "...existing disturbances and proximity to surrounding development, the proposed project would not have substantial effects on these species." (Page 2.19-3). The IS/MND also concludes that because these species "have no official status," no further study of these species is required, and "therefore no avoidance and minimization efforts are required."

Because the IS/MND fails to fully evaluate the potential presence of these species within the project area, the Department finds Caltrans' aforementioned conclusions to be flawed. Further, chaparral sand-verbena, mesa horkelia, and Parry's spineflower are listed as California Native Plant Society (CNPS) 1B.1 species, meaning that they are seriously endangered in California, and white rabbit tobacco is a CNPS 2B.2 species, meaning that it is considered fairly endangered in California. The CNPS states that both CNPS 1B.1 and 2B.2 species "meet the definitions of the California Endangered Species Act of the California Department of Fish and Game Code, and are eligible for state listing. Impacts to these species or their habitat must be analyzed during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA, or those considered to be

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G-1

Comment	Response
G-1	<p>While suitable habitat for plants identified in the comment were identified within the project area, the habitat was determined to be marginally suitable for all identified plant species in the comment. The project is not located within a Criteria Area Plant Species Survey Area (CAPSSA) or Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area (NEPSSA); therefore, no focused surveys are required and were not conducted. Five of the six plants species are "covered" species under the MSHCP (species that will be conserved by the MSHCP when the MSHCP is implemented), with the exception of white rabbit tobacco, which carries a California Rare Plant Rank of 2B by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). Plants designated as a 2B species are species that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.</p> <p>As documented on page 2.19-3 of this Final IS/EA, of the six plants species (the same six plant species identified in the comment) with the potential to occur within the biological study area (BSA), none was observed during the field reconnaissance-level survey of the BSA. The field reconnaissance-level survey followed industry standards for habitat assessments and included the necessary studies determined to be required through a literature review which included the databases and documents published by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Diversity Data Base, the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Soil Data Mart, a United States Fish and Wildlife Service Letter identifying a list of threatened and endangered species that have the potential to occur within the project location, and the MSHCP.</p> <p>As described above, focused plant surveys were not required as the project is not located within a CAPSSA or NEPSSA survey area. The analysis provided within the environmental document satisfies all regulations pertaining to analyses of biological resources per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>

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functionally equivalent to CEQA, as they meet the definition of Rare or Endangered under CEQA Guidelines §15125; (c) and/or §15380." In addition, Plummer's mariposa lily and Coulter's Matilija poppy are CNPS 4.2 (plants of limited distribution – watch list) species, and because the CNPS's California Rare Plant Ranking System recognizes that these species may be significant locally, they strongly recommend:

"California Rare Plant Rank 4 plants are evaluated for consideration during preparation of environmental documents relating to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This may be particularly appropriate for:

- *The type locality;*
- *Populations at the periphery of a species' range,*
- *Areas where the taxon is especially uncommon,*
- *Areas where the taxon has sustained heavy losses, or*
- *Populations exhibiting unusual morphology or occurring on unusual substrates".*

In order to provide a complete description of the baseline condition of the project area the Department recommends that focused surveys following the Department's 2009 Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Communities be conducted during the appropriate times of year, and that the results of this assessment be included in the CEQA document prior to adoption of the MND. If special-status plant populations are observed, the MND should include appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address potential impacts.

Bats

The IS/MND identified the potential presence of two special-status bat species within the project area: western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*) and western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), however no bat sign was observed during the assessment. The Department is concerned that this assessment may have been inadequate to form a complete inventory of the bat species present on the site for the following reasons:

- a) The assessment is outdated. The Department was unable to determine the date of the bat assessment, but we assume that it is likely at least three years old. It is possible that additional bat species may now be present within the project site.
- b) An assessment of the potential presence of suitable bat roosting habitat was not completed under the I-15 bridges over the San Jacinto River. All build alternatives include project elements (e.g., the construction of sound walls)

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G-1

G-2

Comment	Response
G-1	Please refer to Response to Comment G-1, above.
G-2	<p>As documented on page 2.20-3 of this Final IS/EA, two special-status bat species were identified as having the potential to be present within the Biological Study Area (BSA): western mastiff bat (<i>Eumops perotis</i>) and western yellow bat (<i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>). The bridges spanning over the San Jacinto River contain suitable bat night-roosting habitat (i.e., crevices). Bats that utilize crevices, including the western mastiff bat, may use existing bridges within the project limits. The BSA does not contain suitable roosting habitat for the western yellow bat. Minimization Measure AN-9, which is included in Section 2.20.4 of this document as well as in the Environmental Commitments Record for this project, will minimize impacts to bats to the greatest extent feasible.</p> <p>AN-9 Prior to construction, an agency-approved bat biologist shall conduct a bat assessment survey to determine the presence or absence of bat species that may occur within the project limits. Should the presence of bat species be determined during this assessment, the following measures shall be implemented to address potential impacts to bats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project-related construction activities shall occur outside of the bat maternity roosting season (April 1–August 31), if feasible. Should such activities occur during the maternity roosting season (April 1–August 31), the following measures shall be implemented to minimize potential impacts to day-roosting bats (including maternity colonies) from project construction.• Nighttime exit counts and acoustic surveys shall be performed by a Caltrans-approved bat biologist at all structures that may be subject to project-related impacts. These surveys shall be performed during the recognized bat maternity season (April 1–August 31, but preferably in June or July), and as far in advance of construction as possible in order to provide adequate time for mitigation planning.• Construction activities at structures housing maternity colonies shall be coordinated with a Caltrans-approved bat biologist and the CDFW.• If direct impacts to bat roosting habitat are anticipated, humane evictions and exclusions of roosting bats should be performed under the supervision of an agency-approved bat biologist after August 31 in the fall (September or October) prior to any work activities that would result in direct impacts or direct mortality to roosting bats. This action will be performed in coordination with the CDFW. To avoid potential mortality of flightless juvenile bats, evictions and exclusions of bats cannot be performed during the maternity season (April 1–August 31). Winter months are also inappropriate for bat eviction because not all individuals in a roost will emerge on any given night. In addition, long-distance movements to other roost sites are more difficult during the winter when prey availability is scarce, resulting in high mortality rates of evicted bats.• Alternate bat-roosting habitat structures should be installed on the structure prior to the eviction/exclusion of bats from that structure. The design, numbers, and locations of these roost structures should be determined in consultation with a Caltrans-approved bat biologist.• If permanent, direct impacts to bat roosting habitat are anticipated and a humane eviction/exclusion is performed, alternate permanent roosting habitat shall be provided to ensure no net loss of bat roosting habitat. This action shall be coordinated with the CDFW, and locations of these roost structures should be determined in consultation with an agency-approved bat biologist to ensure that the installed habitat will provide adequate mitigation for impacts.• The loss of a night roost can negatively affect the use of a foraging area, and consequently may result in reduced fecundity in species that are already slow to reproduce. If night roosting is confirmed at any of the structures within the proposed project area, the following measure to minimize potential impacts to night-roosting and foraging bats shall be implemented:• At structures where night roosting is suspected or confirmed, work shall be limited to the daylight hours to the greatest extent feasible to avoid potential disruption of foraging. If night work cannot be avoided, night lighting shall be focused only on the area of direct work, airspace access to and from the roost features of the structure shall not be obstructed, and light spillover into the adjacent foraging areas shall be minimized to greatest extent feasible. <p>As discussed on page 2.16-53 in the Noise Section of Chapter 2, no sound walls are planned for the project. Construction activities in the vicinity of the I-15 mainline bridges for all Build Alternatives are limited to pavement application and no substantial ground disturbance is planned within 50 feet of the structures.</p> <p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>

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that may result in ground disturbing activities in relative close proximity to the I-15 bridges. Therefore, the Department recommends that Caltrans complete an assessment of potential bat roosting habitat under and adjacent to the I-15 bridges, to ensure that potential impacts to bats at these locations is assessed under CEQA.

In order to provide a more complete description of the baseline conditions of the site, the Department recommends that Caltrans complete an updated bat habitat assessment of all suitable roosting structures/locations within the project area, during the appropriate time of year and that results be included in the CEQA document prior to adoption of the MND. The Department further recommends that the assessment be completed by a Department-approved bat biologist experienced in the ecology of bats using man-made structures. If bats are detected within the project area the MND should include appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address potential impacts.

Nesting Birds

Mitigation Measure (MM) AN-7 provides mitigation measures for impacts to nesting birds. Please note that it is the project proponent's responsibility to comply with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*). In addition, sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the Fish and Game Code (FGC) afford protective measures as follows: Section 3503 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by FGC or any regulation made pursuant thereto; Section 3503.5 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by FGC or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto; and Section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA. The Department recommends that MM AN-7 be conditioned to require the completion of surveys regardless of time of year, and that surveys include areas containing both vegetated and non-vegetated areas, as some species may nest directly on the ground. Further, the Department recommends the surveys include an assessment of nesting in both native and non-native vegetation.

Least Bell's Vireo

The IS/MND identified two pairs of least Bell's vireo (LBV) within the San Jacinto River, on either side of I-15. Protocol-level surveys for LBV were completed in

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G-2

G-3

G-4

Comment	Response
G-2	Please refer to Response to Comment G-2, above.
G-3	<p>The recommendation to perform pre-construction nesting bird surveys at any time during the year is acknowledged; however, compliance with the MBTA is already conditioned for the project and included as Measures AN-7 of this Final IS/EA. As specified in these measures, the bird nesting season is accurately described as between February 15 to September 1. Compliance with the MBTA will be the responsibility of Caltrans and the City of Lake Elsinore. Therefore, the project's measures to address the MBTA are already satisfied.</p> <p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>
G-4	<p>Surveys for the LBV conducted in 2009 determined that the LBV is present in the project area within the San Jacinto River. As shown in Figure 6 of the project's Natural Environment Study, the LBV territory is not within, but adjacent to the planned construction area and the analysis determined that no direct impacts would occur to the LBV. Several measures are already identified to address potential indirect effects to the LBV and are included in this Final IS/EA. A buffer distance of 500 feet during LBV nesting season will be specified in Measure TE-1 to further minimize potential impacts to the LBV. Additionally, although the southwestern willow flycatcher (SWWF) was not observed during the 2009 focused survey, this species may utilize riparian habitat occupied by the least Bell's vireo within the San Jacinto River With implementation of Measure TE-1, potential indirect effects to the SWWF and its habitat would not be adverse under this alternative.</p> <p>Ambient noise conditions in this part of the project area reach 70 decibels from existing traffic volumes along I-15 as documented in Chapter 2.16, Noise. As described above in the response to comments on bats, construction activities in the vicinity of the I-15 mainline bridges for all build alternatives are limited to pavement application and no substantial ground disturbance is planned with 50 feet of the structure s and a minimum of 140 feet from the LBV territory. Referring to Table 2.16.D, typical noise levels for rollers used in pavement application are 80 decibels. Sound levels are generated from a source, and their decibel level decreases as the distance from that source increases. Sound dissipates exponentially with distance from the noise source. For a single point source, sound levels decrease approximately 6 dB for each doubling of distance from the source. Given the distance away from the nearest construction activity to the LBV habitat, sounds levels would be no more than 74 decibels, 4 decibels above to the existing ambient noise environment. Furthermore, with the modifications to Measure TE-1, requiring a buffer distance of 500 feet during the LBV breeding season, noise levels would be further reduced. Revised Measure TE-1 and new Measure AN-8 to address potential impacts to LBV and SWWF are identified below.</p> <p>TE-1 Prior to clearing or construction during the least Bell's vireo nesting season (March 15 to September 1), highly visible barriers (such as orange construction fencing) will be installed providing a minimum 500-foot buffer around riparian and riverine communities adjacent to the project footprint to be flagged as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) to be preserved. No grading or fill activity of any type will be permitted within these ESAs. In addition, heavy equipment, including motor vehicles, will not be allowed to operate within the ESAs. All construction equipment will be operated in a manner so as to prevent accidental damage to nearby preserved areas. No structure of any kind, or incidental storage of equipment or supplies, shall be allowed within these protected zones. Silt fence barriers will be installed at the ESA boundary to prevent accidental deposition of fill material in areas where vegetation is adjacent to planned grading activities.</p> <p>AN-8 Any new lighting fixtures that would be installed within 300 feet of the San Jacinto River shall be wildlife-friendly and shall be directed away from biologically sensitive areas, the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Conservation Areas, and vegetated drainages.</p> <p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>

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2009. The IS/MND (page 2.21-3) concludes that "...no direct effects to the LBV or its habitat would occur as a result of the proposed project... and with the implementation of mitigation measures TE-1 through TE-6, potential indirect effects to the LBV... would not be adverse..."

The Department is concerned that this assessment is inadequate for the following reasons:

- a. The surveys are outdated. Nearly eight years have elapsed since the completion of these surveys.
- b. The IS/MND fails to include an assessment of project-related noise impacts on these adjacent territories, despite all build alternatives proposing construction within close proximity to the 2009 territories,

In order to provide a more complete description of the baseline conditions of the site, the Department recommends that Caltrans complete updated protocol-level surveys for LBV and that results be included in the CEQA document prior to adoption of the MND. If LBV are detected within the project area the MND should include appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to address potential impacts (including potential impacts associated with noise).

Jurisdictional Waters

The Department requires notification for work undertaken in or near any river, stream, or lake that flows at least episodically, including ephemeral streams, desert washes, and watercourses with a subsurface flow. Fish and Game Code section 1602 states, "An entity may not substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake, unless all of the following occur...." Upon receipt of a complete notification, the Department determines if the activities may substantially adversely affect existing fish and wildlife resources.

Page 2.18-6 of the IS/MND draws various conclusions about whether onsite drainages may or may not be considered jurisdictional under section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code. The Department recommends that Caltrans cite Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. when describing the Department's regulatory authority, which is inclusive of any river, stream, or lake.

Mitigation Measures

The Department recommends that Caltrans revise mitigation measure AN-3 and condition the measure to include the following (edits are in **bold**):

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G-4

G-5

G-6

Comment	Response
G-4	Please refer to Response to Comment G-4, above.
G-5	A citation to Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. has been added to the end of the first paragraph in Section 2.18.2.3.
G-6	<p>The suggested revision to Measure AN-3 is incorporated into this Final IS/EA as recommended, in Section 2.20.4. Minimization measures AN-3 were revised in the discussion in Chapter 2 Section 2.20.4 as well as in the ECR in Appendix E.</p> <p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>

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All equipment maintenance, staging, and dispensing of fuel, oil, or any other such activities will occur in developed or designated non-sensitive upland habitat areas. The designated upland areas will be located in such a manner as to prevent the runoff from any spills from entering waters of the United States or waters of the State.

The Department recommends that Caltrans revise mitigation measure TE-4 and condition the measure to include the following (edits are in ~~strike through~~):

In order to avoid impacts to nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and for compliance with the MSHCP Incidental Take Permit Condition 5, any native vegetation removal or tree (native or exotic) trimming activities will occur outside of the nesting bird season (typically set as February 15 through August 31). In the event vegetation clearing is necessary during the nesting season, a qualified biologist will conduct a pre-construction survey three days prior to any ground disturbing activity to identify the locations of nests. Should nesting birds be found, the biologist will establish an exclusionary buffer that shall be clearly marked in the field by construction personnel under guidance of the biologist. Construction or clearing shall not be conducted within this zone until the biologist determines that the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.

MSHCP Consistency Review Process

The Department and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provided comments on the MSHCP Consistency Request, the project's Natural Environmental Study (NES) and Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) via email on February 13, 2017. The joint email letter requested the provision of additional information for the Agencies to complete their review. The Department encourages Caltrans to complete the MSHCP consistency review process prior to adopting the MND.

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G-6

G-7

G-8

Comment	Response
G-6	Please refer to Response to Comment G-6, above.
G-7	<p>Measure TE-4 was removed from the Final IS/EA as it was duplicative of Measure AN-7 in Section 2.20.4. Suggested revisions to the language pertaining to compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act has been applied to Measure AN-7, as requested.</p> <p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>
G-8	<p>Western Riverside MSHCP Consistency review, which includes a review of the Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) report and the Natural Environment Study (NES) by the USFWS and CDFW to determine consistency with the MSHCP was completed for this project. The CDFW and USFWS issued an MSHCP Consistency Determination noting that the project is in compliance with the MSHCP on August 14, 2017.</p>

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No comments.

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Department Conclusions and Further Coordination

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the IS/MND for the Interstate 15/Railroad Canyon Interchange Improvement Project (SCH No. 2017011018), and we request that Caltrans address the Department's comments and concerns prior to adoption of the MND. If you should have any questions pertaining to the comments provided in this letter, please contact Joanna Gibson at (909) 987-7449 or at joanna.gibson@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L MacNair", with the word "For" written below it.

Leslie MacNair
Regional Manager

cc: Heather Pert, CDFW
Karin Cleary-Rose, USFWS
State Clearinghouse

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David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 3:31 PM
To: Leonard Leichnitz
Cc: David Atwater; Ati Eskandari; 'Alex Menor'; sal@sc-engineering.com; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT; 'Gustavo Quintero'
Subject: RE: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road

Leonard your comments are very much appreciated. Your feedback will be very helpful in finishing the decision making process. Also your comments will be address in the Final Environmental Document. Thank you.

Marie J. Petry

Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

From: Leonard Leichnitz [mailto:lleichnitz@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 3:09 PM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: Grant Taylor <Gtaylor@lake-elsinore.org>
Subject: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road

Dear Ms. Petry:

I appreciate all of the hard work that goes into such a complex environmental analysis. The document looks very thorough, complete and detailed, and I have no problem with the analysis being subject to an Mitigated Negative Declaration/IS/EA, rather than a full-blown EIR.

The concerns and questions that I have on the draft Negative Dec./IS/EA are set forth below.

1. TTM 33370. Under current and future uses (section 2.21.1), the document describes the entire northwest sector of the Franklin interchange as vacant land and does not disclose or discuss the fact that a large vacant parcel measuring approximately 9 acres is entitled for the construction of 90 single family homes (TTM.33370) (APN 373-071-018). TTM 33370 was approved by the City in 2005 and was thereafter extended and remains valid. The final map for TTM 33370 has been planned checked and approved by the public works staff of the City of Lake Elsinore within the past two months. I expect the final map subdividing this property will go to Council for approval and be recorded in the next several months. The homes will be built over the next two years.

- Isn't it true that staff for Lead Agency and for Local Agency Lead knew of TTM 33370 and discussed its potential to interfere with frontage road alignment on the west side of I-15/Franklin Interchange as early as May 13, 2014 in a meeting between City and CalTrans staff?
- In fact, as early as February 2014, I met with staff of the Local Lead Agency and expressed my concerns about this alignment through an approved residential project.
- If City and/or CalTrans staff were aware of TTM 33370 during the period that this environmental analysis was conducted, then why is this land described in "Current uses" and throughout the document as "vacant land" with no discussion of the fact that 90 new homes have been approved by the City and may be built there shortly?

H

H-1

Comment

H-1

Response

Section 2.1.1 of this Final IS/EA describes the existing and future land uses within the four quadrants surrounding both the Railroad Canyon Road interchange and the planned new Franklin Street interchange. As the commenter notes, the lands within the northwest quadrant of the planned new Franklin Street interchange (where APN 373-071-018 is located) are described in this Final IS/EA as currently vacant. The context of Section 2.1.1 is to describe the future land uses (i.e., what the local General Plan designates the land as) and the existing current use (what is on the land at the time of the analysis). Thus, based on this context, APN 373-071-018 is accurately described as vacant. The remaining contextual information does not contain any other substantive statements or questions about this Final IS/EA or analysis therein. Therefore, no further response is required.

The TTM 33370 project is now included in Table 2.1.A, As referenced in this comment, this project was inadvertently omitted from Table 2.1.A of the Draft Environmental Document (DED). However, the DED adequately evaluated the affected parcel associated with TTM 33370. This analysis can be found in Section 2.1 and Section 2.4, in relation to Land Use and Relocation and Property Acquisition respectively, of this Final IS/EA. As correctly noted by the commenter, the City and Caltrans were made aware of the TTM 33370 project and the status of the project in May 2014. At the time this information was made available to the Project Development Team (PDT), and given the status of the Interstate 15 (I-15) / Railroad Canyon Road project at the time this information was provided (environmental technical analysis completed and approved), the PDT decided to proceed with the project as planned and address potential conflicts with TTM 33370 during final design for the Franklin Street interchange. As part of Franklin Street interchange Final Design, the City would work with Caltrans to examine the extension of local connections to the Franklin Street interchange and initiate preparation of supplemental studies to address this potential conflict for the I-15/Railroad Canyon Road project, if necessary.

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H

- In Table 2.1.A, why does the document fail to disclose this approved project, which is not just in the "vicinity" of the project but actually within the Project Area?

2. Alignment of Western frontage road near Franklin.

- It appears that the Western Frontage road is designed to go through the middle of TTM 33370.
- According to Figure 2.3.1, a partial acquisition of 373-071-018 is anticipated. However, the Franklin/I-15 interchange is in Phase II of this Project, so it is safe to assume that if TTM 33370 is built, it will be built before the Franklin/I-15 Interchange.
- Assuming these homes are constructed prior to the construction of the I-15/Franklin Interchange, it may not be possible to purchase only those homes within the anticipated Right of Way. This frontage road will likely require acquisition of all 90 new homes for a multiple of reasons. For example-- circulation to each new home as designed into TM 33370 will be cut off by the frontage road; the frontage road as designed will touch well over half of the 6-home clusters in the project; and, neither the HOA nor the CFD for the project can function if only a small percentage of homes remain after partial acquisition, among other reasons. This road would also eliminate the recreation center in the middle of the development.
- In light of the foregoing, it is likely that acquisition of all 90 new homes will be required if the Western Frontage road is constructed after TTM 33370. Was this assumption included in or excluded from the environmental analysis? Why?
- What portions of the environmental analysis would change if in fact the project requires large numbers of new residences to be acquired on APN 373-071-018 including, for example, the analysis of relocating displaced residents, Residential Assessment Unit for Visual Impacts, noise analysis, and mitigation measures?
- Setting aside whether acquisition of less than all 90 homes would be possible, does the financial analysis recognize that homes will be acquired, or only raw land? If the latter, then why?
- Is an alternative frontage road alignment that does not impact APN 373-071-018 possible?
- If so, where?
- My understanding is that the western frontage road cannot avoid TTM 33370 by routing to the north of the property because under CalTrans standards, the frontage road would be too close to the new Franklin on- and off-ramps. Is this correct?
- If the frontage road is aligned to the south and west to avoid TTM 33370, would it be outside the project area that has been studied environmentally?
- If so, knowing of TTM 33370, why didn't the environmental analysis expand further south and west around TTM 33370 to accommodate potentially moving the frontage road?
- Knowing of TTM 33370, why didn't the alignment attempt to either avoid it, or at least re-align it to minimize its impact on TTM 33370?

3. Avenue 6 and Bancroft portion of Western Frontage road.

- The segment of the western frontage road for the Franklin/I-15 Interchange immediately west of Avenue 6 and north of Bancroft appears to cross a depression or gully.
- Is it anticipated that this portion of the frontage road will fill and traverse the gully at ground level, or is a bridge anticipated here?

4. Figure 1.4, Sheet 2 of 4

- The orange lines with black dots is Alt 4 - Proposed Right of Way, is that correct?
- If I am reading this correctly, this right of way indicates on Sheet 2 of 4 that Bancroft will intersection and merge into the Western Frontage road immediately prior to Ave 6, that Avenue 5 will intersect the

↑ H-1

H-2

H-3

↓ H-4
↓ H-5

Comment	Response
H-1	Please refer to Response to Comment H-1, above.
H-2	<p>As part of Franklin Street interchange Final Design, Caltrans and the City would examine the potential impacts of construction of the planned frontage road and identify parcels required for partial and/or full acquisitions. Consideration of the viability of the planned development will be taken into consideration when a final determination of acquisition requirements is made.</p> <p>In addition, the analysis is based upon an existing condition that is the baseline from which impacts are determined. The baseline for this Final IS/EA is the point at which the environmental analysis was completed. The baseline and the analysis pertaining to the parcel affected can be found in Section 2.1 and Section 2.4, in relation to Land Use and Relocation and Property Acquisition respectively, of this Final IS/EA.</p> <p>While this Final IS/EA does include an analysis of the potential loss of tax revenue from property acquisitions, it only discusses the potential loss associated with a full acquisition and associated information. The number of full acquisitions identified in this Final IS/EA was based upon conceptual designs for each Build Alternative in the baseline condition. As no homes were located on the parcel at the time of the analysis, the analysis only considered the partial acquisition of APN 373-071-018 to accommodate the planned frontage road. When Phase 2 of this project is implemented, the project would be reevaluated to determine if the western frontage road can potentially impact TTM 33370.</p> <p>The environmental study area generally extends beyond the project construction limits to identify any potential direct and indirect impacts. However, in the absence of a defined new alignment, it is not possible to determine whether or not a realigned frontage road would be outside of the area studied.</p>
H-3	Based on the conceptual design for this frontage road at the time of the analysis, the depression/gully would be filled with fill material to construct the road at grade. No bridge structure would be included with the construction of the frontage road.
H-4	Correct. The orange and black lines on Figure 1.4 represent the Proposed Right-of-Way for Alternative 4.
H-5	No. Some of the orange and black lines depicted in Figure 1.4 of the Draft IS/EA were included inadvertently and do not represent the Proposed Right-of-Way for Alternative 4 accurately. The planned improvements on sheet 2 of 4 in Figure 1.4 are identical for all Build Alternatives. Therefore, sheet 2 of 4 in Figures 1.2 and 1.3 are representative of the planned improvements that should be depicted in Figure 1.4. As a result, Figure 1.4 has been corrected to remove unnecessary lines and be consistent with the information depicted in Figures 1.2 and 1.3.

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H

Western Frontage road and continue north to turn into Franklin immediately adjacent to the southbound off-ramp at Franklin interchange, and that Franklin will turn due west and intersect again with the Western Frontage road. Is my understanding correct?

- Is the circulation scheme in this area as depicted in Figure 1.4 Sheet 2 for Alternative 4 different than the circulation schemes for Alternatives 2 and 3?
- If not, why is no similar ROW designation show for Alternative 2 on Figure 1.2 sheet 2 of 4 or Alternative 3 on Figure 1.3, sheet 2 of 4?
- Why is no cut and fill shown in this area for Alternative 4, when the cut/fill legend was provided for Alternatives 2 and 3?
- After accounting for the cut and fill required to construct the Franklin/I-15 Interchange, is the ROW envisioned for Bancroft, Avenue 5, and Franklin in the second question above (Section 4, bullet point 2) still viable?

H-5

H-6

I look forward to your responses to my concerns above.

—
Leonard Leichnitz
Lumos Communities LLC
2618 San Miguel Dr. #503
Newport Beach, CA 92660
email - LEICHNITZ@LUMOSCOMMUNITIES.COM

Comment	Response
H-6	<p>The circulation scheme for the area in the vicinity of the Franklin Street interchange area, as depicted in Figure 1.4 sheet 2, is identical for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. There is no difference in the circulation scheme between the three Build Alternatives at this location. Some of the orange and black lines depicted in Figure 1.4 of the Draft IS/EA were included inadvertently and do not represent the Proposed Right-of-Way for Alternative 4 accurately. The planned improvements on sheet 2 of 4 in Figure 1.4 are identical for all Build Alternatives. Therefore, sheet 2 of 4 in Figures 1.2 and 1.3 are representative of the planned improvements that should be depicted in Figure 1.4. As a result, Figure 1.4 has been corrected to remove unnecessary lines and be consistent with the information depicted in Figures 1.2 and 1.3.</p> <p>Cut-and-fill data were inadvertently left out of Figure 1.4 in the Draft IS/EA. Figure 1.4 has been corrected to include information relating to cut and fill for Alternative 4 in this Final IS/EA.</p>

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David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2017 11:19 AM
To: Jim D'Angelo
Cc: David Atwater; sal@sc-engineering.com; 'Alex Menor'; Ati Eskandari; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: I-15 RAILROAD CANYON ROAD PROJECT: Assessor Parcel # 363171003-4

Thank you Jim for your comment. We will respond to it in the final Environmental Document. Please attend the Public Information Meeting, so we can discuss further. The public information meeting, in an open house format, will be held **February 1, 2017, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**, at the City of Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, 183 N. Main Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530. We look forward to meeting you. Thank you.

Marie J. Petry
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

From: Jim D'Angelo [mailto:jd@jfdholdings.com]
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2017 10:12 AM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: I-15 RAILROAD CANYON ROAD PROJECT: Assessor Parcel # 363171003-4

Marie;

We own the property at Assessor Parcel # 363171003-4 which is commonly known as 300 Diamond Drive, Lake Elsinore.

So long as we continue to have the existing curb cut on Diamond Drive for ingress and egress to our property and none of our building or parking area is taken and we do not lose any of the existing functional aspects or amenities, then we would not be opposed to alternatives 2, 3, or 4. This is our family business and or property must be able to operate in its existing manner with all of the existing amenities.

We understand that with Alternative 4 a minor sliver of land which is shown on sheet L-4 might be taken, which I was told by Alex Menor from you offices is at most 10 feet of land at the curve portion of the on ramp then slivering down in a banana shape. Is there a time that it will be staked for our review or we can see a plan with dimensions so we can see how many feet it will be from our building?

Thank you;

Jim D'Angelo
JFD Management, LLC
Phone: 424-327-2088
Email: jd@jfdholdings.com

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Comment

Response

I-1

The commenter correctly understands that a portion of APNs 363-171-003 and 363-171-004 would require partial acquisitions to accommodate the construction of Alternative 4. Partial acquisitions for Alternative 4 are depicted in Figure 2.3.2 of the IS/EA. On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Therefore, there would be no impacts to these properties as Alternative 4 would not be constructed. Because Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative, the property will not be staked based on the Alternative 4 design and there will be no plan with dimensions relative to Alternative 4 available for review. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated.

I-1

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J

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2017 11:16 AM
To: Judy Lovitt
Cc: sal@sc-engineering.com; David Atwater; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road

Judy – Thank you for your comments. We will be responding to your comments on the Final Environmental Document. Please plan to attend the public information meeting on February 1, 2017 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, 183 N. Main Street, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530. We look forward to meeting you.

Marie J. Petry

Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

From: Judy Lovitt [mailto:judylovitt@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2017 4:22 PM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: I-15 Railroad Canyon Road

Marie,

Good Afternoon!

Thank you for looking at solving the problem of the congestion at Railroad Canyon Road. After living here for 20+years, it will be great when the intersection is improved. Please see my remarks below next to each option.

Four Alternatives are under consideration.

Alternative 1 - No Build - **not an option too dangerous**

Alternative 2 - Hook Ramps @ Grape Street **A great solution!**

Alternative 3 - Hook Ramps at Grape Street and Casino Drive **another great solution!**

Alternative 4 - Reconstruct existing intersections on Railroad Canyon Road between Lakeshore Drive-Mission Trail and Summerhill Drive-Grape Street to roundabouts (yield control). **Please do not consider this! Unfortunately there would be too many accidents as not a lot driver's are familiar enough with roundabouts or yielding for that matter. When the one in Temecula Wine Country opened, unfortunately, I have personally witnessed more than one driver going the wrong way! The one in the Menifee Marketplace, Driver's usually don't yield when they are suppose to and stop when they should not.**

All proposed Build alternatives also proposes to construct a new Interchange @ New Franklin Street located about 1,160 ft. north of existing Franklin Street. The Build Alternatives range in cost from \$97.4 million to \$112.4 million - depending on build alternative selected **Another Great Solution!**

Many thanks for your time and sincerely appreciate all the work and effort going in to resolve the problem.

Yours truly,

Judy Lovitt

Comment

J-1

Response

As documented in this Final IS/EA, Section 2.7.3 (Traffic), the planned roadway and freeway interchange improvements would not increase hazards due to design features, as the construction of the project would be required to adhere to Caltrans design standards. No access or roadway improvements have been planned that would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).

On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated.

J-1

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K

Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Project
February 1, 2017 • Lake Elsinore Cultural Center

COMMENT CARD

Name: Cheryl Feskowetz Phone: (951) 471-3639 Date: 2/1/17
Address: 53219 Fetterby St, Lake Elsinore, CA 92532
Affiliation: Resident Email: _____
Comments: No roundabouts, please

K-1

Comments on the Project may be submitted during the open forum public information meeting, emailed to marie.petry@dot.ca.gov, or submitted by mailing this postcard.
Comments are due by February 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. ☒ I request to be on the Project Mailing List.

Meeting Accommodations:

- How did you hear about this open forum public hearing or project? WhatsupLake Elsinore Facebook
- If you are limited in your ability to communicate in English, were your communication needs adequately met?
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable
- If you were in need of a reasonable accommodation at this meeting as a result of a disability, were your accommodation needs adequately met?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Applicable
- If you checked No to either of the two questions above, please explain below how your needs could be better met in the future:

To accommodate persons with disabilities, this card will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

Comment	Response
K-1	On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.

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L

Comment	Response
L-1	On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated.

Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Project

February 1, 2017 • Lake Elsinore Cultural Center

COMMENT CARD

Name: Ashok S Kalyan Phone: (818) 991-0742 Date: 2/1/17
Address: 9146 Glenbridge Rd. Westlake Va CA 91361
Affiliation: Property Owner Email: ashokkalyan@stglobal.net
Comments: We favor Alternative 2 since it is the least disruptive to our property. Shoppers Sq. on Casino Dr. We would like to know which alternative is chosen so we can market/lease Dizzler which is a part of Shoppers Sq. so would be adversely affected by Alternative 3.

Comments on the Project may be submitted during the open forum public information meeting, emailed to marie.petry@dot.ca.gov, or submitted by mailing this postcard.

Comments are due by February 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. ☒ I request to be on the Project Mailing List.

Meeting Accommodations:
• How did you hear about this open forum public hearing or project? Received notice
• If you are limited in your ability to communicate in English, were your communication needs adequately met?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Applicable
• If you were in need of a reasonable accommodation at this meeting as a result of a disability, were your accommodation needs adequately met?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Applicable
• If you checked No to either of the two questions above, please explain below how your needs could be better met in the future:

To accommodate persons with disabilities, this card will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

L-1

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M

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 12:41 PM
To: Pat Young
Cc: David Atwater; sal@sc-engineering.com; Ati Eskandari; 'Alex Menor'; 'Gustavo Quintero'; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: proposed I-15/Railroad Canyon Road interchange improvement project in Lake Elsinore

Pat – Thank you for your comments. We very much appreciate your feedback.

Marie J. Petry

Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

From: Pat Young [mailto:patyoungmath@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 11:39 AM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: proposed I-15/Railroad Canyon Road interchange improvement project in Lake Elsinore

Ms. Petry,
I have traveled the I-15 northbound at rush hour for 20 years as my place of employment is in Norco. To get home I take the Bundy Canyon off ramp one off ramp south of the Railroad Canyon off ramp. The congestion has gotten worse exiting at Railroad Canyon over the years and only somewhat alleviated by the widening into the shoulder on the approach to the off ramp. I take the Railroad Canyon off ramp occasionally for purposes of shopping. I can attest to the fact that 90% or more of the traffic is headed east at the exit; there is virtually no traffic in the west bound lane at the off ramp exit. In all the years I have driven by this mess I have always said the ONLY way to improve the condition is to utilize the Franklin Street overpass. I don't know how far away it should take traffic, but it must go a substantial distance away from the immediate neighborhoods next to the freeway.
Please do not consider traffic circles. The article in the paper said "requires a lot of public education and training". There isn't enough education possible to teach the people of Lake Elsinore how to avoid the accidents that will occur here. Don't forget the first time users who come to events at the motocross raceway, the airport and the stadium. They will get a very big surprise using a traffic circle.

Good luck with your designs,
Pat Young

M-1

Comment	Response
M-1	<p>As documented in Section 2.7.3 (Traffic), the planned roadway and freeway interchange improvements would not increase hazards due to design features, as the construction of the project would be required to adhere to Caltrans design standards. No access or roadway improvements have been planned that would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). In addition, there are improvements also included to the proposed Franklin Street Interchange. Please refer to Section 1.4.1.3 of this Final IS/EA for details of these improvements.</p> <p>On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.</p>

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N

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 12:00 PM
To: Larry Dirgo
Cc: Alex Menor; Ati Eskandari; David Atwater; sal@sc-engineering.com; Gustavo Quintero; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: Railroad Canyon ramp

Thank you Larry for your comments. Your feedback will help us in the decision making process for preferred alternative. We will respond to your comments in the Final Environmental Document. Thank you, Marie

From: Larry Dirgo [mailto:ldirgo@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 5:37 PM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: lldirgo@parker.com
Subject: Railroad Canyon ramp

Marie,
Hello I read the article in the PE on the I15 railroad canyon interchange and agree there needs to be some upgrades, in the 20 + years I have been driving that I have seen many of upgrades to the ramp that never fixed the traffic problems, it went from a small 2 lane ramp to what it is now and is years behind the growth of the area. The latest upgrade the deceleration lane did absolutely nothing to alleviate the traffic backup. The traffic can back up for more than a mile to get off the SB15 between 5 and 630 pm. I think the hook ramps or the Franklin street ramps would be a great idea but it sounds like they would not happen for a while. I will probably retire first. I think the traffic circle/roundabout idea would be a mess. I looked at the animation of the roundabouts and the amount of traffic shown is about the amount from years ago, has anybody told them about the 1000's of more houses being built up the hill? Roundabouts are used back east in areas that don't handle the amount of traffic that gets off here and they haven't been sitting on the 91 for an hour or 2 before getting there. Some people's patients are short by then and just cut in where ever. I have a few suggestions that can be done in the meantime.

1. Being there are 4 lanes currently on Railroad canyon road heading east from the ramp that turns into 5 lanes and only 2 left turn lanes on the SB ramp, by restriping and widening a portion on RR canyon road past grape street the right turn only number 5 lane could be a third straight lane and a third turn lane could be added to the ramp.
2. The number 2 left turn lane on RR canyon road to the NB 15 ramp could be turned into a straight and left turn lane to so the Tuscan Hills folks could use that lane instead of the straight lanes.
3. The number 1 left turn lane on the SB ramp could be extended .3 miles toward the 15.
4. Connect Ethanac road to the 74 in Perris.

Thanks for listening,
Larry Dirgo

Comment	Response
N-1	On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.
N-2	As described in Section 1.4 of this Final IS/EA, Alternatives, several Build Alternatives have been studied over the past several years. For Build Alternatives to be considered feasible, they must meet the project's purpose and need, described in Section 1.2 of this Final IS/EA, while maintaining operational performance at the interchange ramps, on the Interstate 15 (I-15) mainline, or at local intersections. Cost of the project and severity of impacts are also considered in addition to right-of-way constraints. Additionally, Section 2.7 of this Final IS/EA, Traffic and Transportation/ Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, assesses the impacts of the planned improvements on traffic conditions. Overall, all of the Build Alternatives as currently designed are capable of improving the level of service upon completion of Phase 2 when compared to the No Build Alternative.

N-1

N-2

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O

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 12:04 PM
To: Kelly Jackson
Cc: Ati Eskandari; Alex Menor; David Atwater; sal@sc-engineering.com; Gustavo Quintero; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: Railroad Canyon Raod

Kelly – Thank you for your comments. We appreciate your feedback. We will respond to your comments in the Final Environmental Document. Thank you, Marie Petry

From: Kelly Jackson [mailto:kellyjdbk@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 8:29 PM
To: marie.petry@dot.ca.gov.
Subject: Railroad Canyon Raod

Good evening Ms. Petry,

We have evaluated all of the proposals, and don't really see where they will work. None of them address the additional space that is needed on Railroad Canyon Rd.to truly alleviate the problem that now exists.

We think that a better alternative would be to add a second deceleration lane southbound on the I-15 Railroad Canyon Rd. off ramp. This would alleviate the back up on the shoulder. Then, allow the cars that are exiting Railroad Canyon Rd. to turn left from the existing lane-third from the left of the four lanes, which now only allows the cars to go straight back onto the on ramp or to turn right. Then instead of making the far right lane a "right turn only" lane onto Grape St., let the cars go straight and add a third lane up Railroad Canyon Rd. which would connect to the third lane that already exists at the top of Railroad Canyon Rd. There should also be a lane added (a third lane) on the other side of Railroad Canyon Rd. to allow for three lanes all the way down and up Railroad Canyon Rd. (currently there is only two lanes down the center of the road on both sides). Everything past Canyon Hills and Canyon Lake going east and west all the way to and from Hemet has six lanes. Lake Elsinore is the only place that doesn't have six lanes and that is what is causing the problem.

We also believe that if you add an on ramp going to I-15 Corona Northbound approximately a quarter mile back (before all of the businesses at the bottom of Railroad Canyon Rd. coming from Canyon Lake/Hills), now built over the wash, this would alleviate the bottle neck at the bottom of Railroad Canyon Rd. People could just merge to the right onto a couple of lanes (on ramps) as they come down from Canyon Lake/Hills, which is ultimately people from Menifee, Winchester and Hemet.

Regarding funding, the developers in Winchester, Hemet and Menifee should all be paying for this as it is these developments that are adding to the traffic onto Railroad Canyon Rd.

Thank you for soliciting opinions/responses to the I-15 off/on ramps at Railroad Canyon Rd. in Lake Elsinore. My husband and I have lived in lake Elsinore since 1987, and have watched many of the surrounding cities go through problems such as this with success at alleviating traffic concerns both on the 15 freeway at various off ramps and within the city limits We are confident that this will happen in our city as well. We are glad to see that there is an awareness of the ever growing concern with the traffic on both the freeway and the city as a result of the growth that is continuing to take place in Lake Elsinore and beyond all the way to Hemet.

O-1

O-2

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O-5

Comment	Response
O-1	<p>As described in Section 1.4 of this Final IS/EA, Alternatives, several Build Alternatives have been studied over the past several years. For Build Alternatives to be considered feasible, they must meet the project's purpose and need, described in Section 1.2 of this Final IS/EA, while maintaining operational performance at the interchange ramps, on the Interstate 15 (I-15) mainline, or at local intersections. Cost of the project and severity of impacts are also considered in addition to right-of-way constraints. The provision of additional space along Railroad Canyon Road would require substantial right-of-way acquisition and complete reconstruction of the I-15 mainline bridges over Railroad Canyon Road, which would substantially increase the cost and timeline for improvements to be implemented. Section 2.7 of this Final IS/EA, Traffic and Transportation/ Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, assesses the impacts of the planned improvements on traffic conditions. Overall, all of the Build Alternatives as currently designed are capable of improving the level of service upon completion of Phase 2 when compared to the No Build Alternative. As discussed in detail in the Need section of Chapter 1, (Section 1.2.2, page 1-6), and in the Traffic section of Chapter 2 (Section 2.7.3.2, beginning on page 2.7.5), Alternative 2 is expected to provide an acceptable level of operational performance.</p> <p>On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated.</p>
O-2	<p>The placement of a second deceleration lane on southbound I-15 would require substantial bridge work on the southbound I-15 mainline bridge over the San Jacinto River to create the necessary space for an adequate second lane and shoulder, which would substantially increase the cost and timeline for improvements to be implemented. Existing roadway geometries and right-of-way constraints do not allow for a restriping of the southbound off- ramp intersection at Railroad Canyon Road as suggested and was not considered for this reason. As described above in Response O-1, for Build Alternatives to be considered feasible, they must meet the project's purpose and need, described in Section 1.2 of this Final IS/EA, while maintaining operational performance at the interchange ramps, on the Interstate 15 (I-15) mainline, or at local intersections. While adding a third lane along either side Railroad Canyon Road may be feasible, this improvement was not necessary as the current design for all Build Alternatives would improve the level of service to an acceptable level of operational performance.</p>
O-3	<p>The construction of new structures within natural areas such as the San Jacinto River, which would be required in conjunction with the suggestion of adding an on-ramp as described, would be anticipated to result in even greater environmental impacts than what was identified in conjunction with studying the three build alternatives for this project, which are summarized in this Final IS/EA.</p>
O-4	<p>Funding for the project comes from multiple sources including the City of Lake Elsinore, State and Federal sources, and the Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fund (TUMF). The TUMF was approved by voters in 2002 with the passing of Measure A. Under the TUMF, developers pay a development fee to fund transportation projects that are necessary as a result of the growth created by their projects. The TUMF is administered by the Western Riverside Council of Governments and funds both local and regional arterial projects.</p>
O-5	<p>Thank you for your interest in this project. This information does not contain any substantive statements or questions about this Final IS/EA or analysis therein. Therefore, no response is required.</p>

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We were disappointed at the addition of the deceleration lane on the southbound off ramp at Railroad Canyon Rd. because we knew when it was proposed that it would not alleviate the problem, which it did not, and that money should have been used more wisely. We cannot afford to pay for alternatives that do not work.

Thank you.

John and Kelly Jackson
(951) 990-3504

O

O-6

Comment

Response

O-6

Thank you for your interest in this project .The new deceleration lane on the southbound off-ramp was constructed to provide vehicle queuing storage space for the Railroad Canyon Road southbound off-ramp, and discourage the use of the outside southbound I-15 mainline shoulder for queuing vehicles. The deceleration project was needed due to safety concerns from vehicles queues backing up onto the I-15 mainline creating a hazardous condition at the southbound off ramp and Railroad Canyon Road.

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P

Comment	Response
P-1	On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Your input on the roject is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 12:23 PM
To: Dennis Wright
Cc: David Atwater; sal@sc-engineering.com; Ati Eskandari; 'Alex Menor'; 'Gustavo Quintero'; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: Round a bouts Alternative 4. At I-15 railroad canyon interchange

Dennis - Your comments are very much appreciated. Your feedback will be very helpful in our decision making process. Thank you for you input.

Marie J. Petry

Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

-----Original Message-----
From: Dennis Wright [mailto:mtnfoke@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 11:19 AM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: Sue Wright <sueww1@hotmail.com>
Subject: Round a bouts Alternative 4. At I-15 railroad canyon interchange

The paper asked to have residents voice their opinion on the series of roundabouts that are under consideration (see above location). I agree with the Hemet resident who voiced his opinion in the press enterprise on February 8, 2017 It's definitely not going to work. It will cause many accidents. Just go sit in the target center in Menifee and watch while the idiot drivers try to negotiate the ONE roundabout to get into the center. No one knows how to merge, they don't understand the wording "yield". They take off, cut off the people in the roundabout who have the right away and cut across lanes. On any given day, they drive the same way, and that's with lower traffic. The police would spend more time responding to accidents in the roundabouts and that would tie up the traffic even worse than it is with the traffic lights. People in California DONOT know how to drive roundabouts, that was never part of their driver training and I've seen "Driver training" cars. With the teachers not know how to negotiate the Target center, heaven help the rest of us in a major traffic scenario trying to drive with people who do not know what to do in this traffic pattern. Believe me, it would have the freeway and Railroad canyon road backlogged with traffic. Ugh, please NO ROUNDABOUTS. The "sane" and "competent" drivers thank-you. We have enough idiots on the road, we don't need to add to their confusion. Thanks for listening to me on this subject. Yes, this concept works in Colorado, that's basically all they have in vail, Avon, etc. but they used to them. we vacationed there and watched while the out of towners had real difficulty negotiating them. If you have any questions, my phone is 951-847-5212. Thanks, one of the long time drivers who DOES know how to drive them, but I don't want them because a majority of the population doesn't know how to. Thanks Sue Wright

P-1

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Q

David Atwater

From: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 10:21 AM
To: Lisa S
Cc: David Atwater; 'Sal Chavez'; 'Ati Eskandari'; Alex Menor; Gustavo Quintero; Moreno-Castaneda, Eduardo@DOT
Subject: RE: RR canyon/15 fwy

Thank you Lisa. Your comment is much appreciated. Your feedback will help us in our decision making process.

Marie J. Petry

Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 8
(909) 388-1387

From: Lisa S [mailto:dcmeshirley@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 9:43 AM
To: Petry, Marie J@DOT <marie.petry@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: RR canyon/15 fwy

Hello,

My 7 mile commute from Menifee to Lake Elsinore sometimes takes 30 min because of the traffic at RR Canyon and 15 fwy.
It takes up to 4 signal changes to make a left turn from Auto Center Dr. onto Diamond Dr.

In my humble opinion, Altenative 3 makes the most sense. The round about is probably not a good option. There is a round about at the shopping complex in Menifee and people get so confused.....

Thanks so much for reading this, I pray that there is a good option soon.

Sincerely,
Lisa Shirley
Menifee

Q-1

Comment

Response

Q-1

Your preference for Alternative 3 is acknowledged. On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/EA. Table 1.Q in Section 1.4.2 of this Final IS/EA compares all alternatives for this project in detail. Some of the advantages that Alternative 2 has over Alternative 3 include lesser property acquisitions and lower cost to construct Alternative 2. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.

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No comments.

R

Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Project

February 1, 2017 • Lake Elsinore Cultural Center

COMMENT CARD

Name: ALEX GONZALEZ
TRADELAND PROPERTIES, LLC Phone: (619) 954-0386 Date: 2/6/17

Address: 40132 BANYAN ST. MURRIETH, CA 92563

Affiliation: TRADELAND PROPERTIES, LLC Email: alexdirect7@hotmail.com

Comments: PLEASE REVIEW ATTACHED LETTER.

Comments on the Project may be submitted during the open forum public information meeting, emailed to marie.pettry@dot.ca.gov, or submitted by mailing this postcard.

Comments are due by February 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

☐ I request to be on the Project Mailing List.

Meeting Accommodations:

- How did you hear about this open forum public hearing or project? _____
- If you are limited in your ability to communicate in English, were your communication needs adequately met?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable
- If you were in need of a reasonable accommodation at this meeting as a result of a disability, were your accommodation needs adequately met?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable
- If you checked No to either of the two questions above, please explain below how your needs could be better met in the future:

To accommodate persons with disabilities, this card will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

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TRADELAND PROPERTIES, LLC
PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT & LEASING

February 6, 2017

California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Planning
Attn : Marie Petry,
464 West 4th Street, MS 821
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

RE: Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Prog. Phase 2 (New Overpass and Exit near Franklin Street Overpass)

Dear Ms. Petry,

I attended the recent meeting concerning this project and am the owner of the following parcels:

- 373-072-004
- 373-072-005
- 373-072-006
- 373-072-007
- 373-072-015
- 373-072-016
- 373-072-017
- 373-072-018
- 373-072-019
- 373-072-020
- 373-072-021
- 373-072-022
- 373-072-023

After reviewing the plan, I noticed that about 25% of this group of parcels would be acquired greatly limiting our future use and the rest would be land locked with no viable access. I have the following questions and concerns that I request answers for our long term planning should we decide to develop the land or sell to a prospective developer.

1. What traffic access options would be provided to access these parcels ?
2. What noise suppression would be planned to buffer future businesses ?
3. What is the scheduled timing of this project from acquisition to completion ?
4. Please confirm that Cox and Talbert streets are no longer viable and abandoned.

Please also send any other information that would help us know and plan future development.

Sincerely,



Alex Gonzalez
President
Tradeland Properties, LLC

40132 BANYAN STREET, MURRIETA, CA 92563 (619) 954-0386 FAX: (951) 461-1451

R

R-1

R-2
R-3
R-4
R-5

Comment	Response
R-1	During property acquisitions, access to any remaining parcels will be provided by the City of Lake Elsinore. Where adequate access cannot be provided, parcels will be fully acquired.
R-2	The planned Franklin Street Interchange is part of Phase 2 of the Interstate 15 (I-15)/Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Improvement Project, which is not currently funded; however, it is anticipated to be constructed by 2035. Any proposed development within the identified interchange footprint would have to comply with the required access control and take into consideration the planned interchange layout as part of their site's development plan. The primary access to the affected parcels would be provided via Bancroft Way. During property acquisitions, access to any remaining parcels will be provided by the City of Lake Elsinore. Where adequate access cannot be provided, parcels will be fully acquired.
R-3	Chapter 2.16 of this Final IS/EA. Noise, addresses consideration of noise impacts. At the time of the analysis, no sensitive receptors were located on the affected properties, nor have any development entitlements been approved; therefore, there was no need to evaluate abatement of potential noise impacts. If and when a proposal for development is prepared for the subject properties that precedes construction and completion of Phase 2 of this project, and processed by the City, the environmental review conducted for those future projects will determine what noise attenuation may be required as part of the development. Should a development proposal precede the completion of Phase 2, and results in the placement of sensitive receptors that could potentially be impacted by noise from project-related activities, Phase 2 of this project may require the preparation of a noise analysis to determine if noise attenuation measures would be required to ensure that impacts are not adverse.
R-4	As noted above in Response to Comment R-2, the funding (including acquisition and construction) for Phase 2 of the project is not yet secured but is anticipated to be constructed by the year 2035. Phase 1 of the project is anticipated to take approximately 18 months for Alternative 2 beginning in 2018. Phase 2 of the project is anticipated to take approximately 24 months beginning in 2032 for Alternative 2. Funding for Phase 2 is not currently available but it will be secured prior to going to construction.
R-5	At this time, no confirmation of the status of Cox and Talbert Streets can be made as there are no plans for development currently at these properties. The applicable parcel map depicting the parcels identified in the comment and the City right of way for Cox and Talbert Streets is Riverside County Parcel Map Book 373, Page/Block 072, Parcel 23, Check Digit 9, available for viewing at the Riverside County Assessor's Office online Property Information Center database. The vacation of Cox and Talbert Streets would need to be addressed as part of any Tentative Tract Map filed over the properties identified in the comment letter.

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S

2/8/16

Ms. Marie Betsy,
I am writing to you about the proposed I plan to put five (!!) traffic roundabouts on Railroad Canyon in Lake Elsinore.
Although I live in Menifee, I sometimes do business in Canyon Lake and Lake Elsinore. I sometimes drive onto 15 to drive to Murietta for shopping there. If roundabouts are put into that area, I will not be driving that way any longer. In my opinion, roundabouts are very confusing and dangerous anywhere, much less at 15 and Railroad Canyon. It is the worst "fix" that I can think of.
A roundabout was put into the Mall in Menifee a few years ago, which I and others I know will not use, and it keeps us away from the Mall. I hope that roundabouts at 15 and Lake Elsinore won't happen.
- Roberta Alexander
29549 Warm Springs Dr
Menifee, CA 92584

S-1

Comment
S-1

Response

For Build Alternatives to be considered feasible, they must meet the project's purpose and need, described in Section 1.2 of this Final IS/Ea, while maintaining operational performance at the interchange ramps, on the I-15 mainline, or at local intersections. Cost of the project and severity of impacts are also considered in addition to right-of-way constraints. On April 11, 2017, the Project Development Team (PDT) identified a Preferred Alternative. Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative identified in this Final IS/Ea. Your input on the project is greatly appreciated. No roundabouts will be constructed.

As documented in Appendix A, CEQA Environmental Checklist, Response XVI.d., the planned roadway and freeway interchange improvements would not increase hazards due to design features, as the construction of the project would be required to adhere to Caltrans design standards. No access or roadway improvements have been planned that would substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).

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T

Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Road Interchange Project

February 1, 2017 • Lake Elsinore Cultural Center

COMMENT CARD

Name: DONALD A NORDINE Phone: (502) 944-8829 Date: 2-1-17

Address: 14259 IMPERIAL HWY LA MIRADA CA 90638

Affiliation: OWNER OF LAND Email: PONNORONE@Gmail.com

Comments: I feel your new Road takes Too much of my most Value Land
+ will the extended road North go through my land?
will water - sewer - electric come with road + will we be
paid for our land?

Comments on the Project may be submitted during the open forum public information meeting, emailed to marie.petry@dot.ca.gov, or submitted by mailing this postcard.

Comments are due by February 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

☒ I request to be on the Project Mailing List.

Meeting Accommodations:

- Meeting Accommodations:
- How did you hear about this open forum public hearing or project? mail
- If you are limited in your ability to communicate in English, were your communication needs adequately met?
- ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable
- If you were in need of a reasonable accommodation at this meeting as a result of a disability, were your accommodation needs adequately met?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable
- If you checked No to either of the two questions above, please explain below how your needs could be better met in the future:

To accommodate persons with disabilities, this card will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

Comment

T-1

Response

The commenter did not specify which properties they own. However, it was determined that they are the owner of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 363-090-001 and 363-090-003 based on a comparison of the address provided in the comment card and the address identified for these parcels in this Final IS/EA's Distribution List provided in Chapter 5. These two parcels are located on the east side of Interstate 15 (I-15) in the vicinity of the planned extension of Camino Del Norte where it intersects with the planned new Franklin Street interchange. See sheet 4 of 11 of Figure 2.3.1 of this Final IS/EA. Based on conceptual engineering drawings at the time of the analysis, the information depicted in Figure 2.3.1 of this Final IS/EA is the anticipated extent of property acquisitions associated with APNs 363-090-001 and 363-090-003. As part of the Franklin Street interchange Final Design, Caltrans and the City of Lake Elsinore would examine the potential impacts of construction of the planned frontage road and identify parcels required for partial and/or full acquisition.

All property acquired will be acquired at fair market value at the time of acquisition. The City of Lake Elsinore, in cooperation with Caltrans, must operate under strict guidelines when property must be acquired for transportation projects. If this Project must acquire all or part of a property, the property owner will receive just compensation at a fair and equitable price. The process is designed to protect property owners. If and when a decision is made to acquire your property, discuss the process with a Project relocation advisor. For now, a summary of the Department's Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is included in Appendix D of this Final IS/EA. Additional information is available from the following websites:

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/row/pubs/residential_english.pdf

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/owners_and_tenants/

Currently, there are no plans to install new water, sewer, and electrical facilities with the associated extension of Camino Del Norte. Any potential utility conflicts will be addressed as part of the Franklin Street interchange Final Design. The project will not be responsible for installation of any utilities with respect to these parcels.

T-1

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