

# NOTICE OF PREPARATION

**To:**

**From:** Caltrans District 11  
4050 Taylor Street, MS 242  
San Diego, CA 92110

## Notice of Preparation of a Joint Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA)

This notice is to inform you that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will be the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act (CEQA/NEPA) Lead Agency and will prepare an EIR/EA for the San Diego – Coronado Bay Bridge Suicide Deterrent Project. Caltrans is requesting feedback from your agency as to the proposed project scope and content of the environmental information which is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR/EA prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the proposed project.

Attached are the project purpose and need; project location; project description; alternatives and design variations; and probable environmental impacts (Attachment A). An Initial Study has not been previously prepared.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice or by **Tuesday, July 14, 2020**. Comments can be submitted from **Monday, June 15, 2020 to Tuesday, July 14, 2020**.

A virtual scoping meeting has been scheduled for the review of this proposed project and to solicit comments for consideration in the EIR/EA:

**Date:** Thursday, June 25, 2020

**Time:** 5 PM – 7 PM Pacific Standard Time

**For Meeting Information:** <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-11/current-projects/coronadobridge>

Please send your comments to [D11.CoronadoBridge.ED@dot.ca.gov](mailto:D11.CoronadoBridge.ED@dot.ca.gov) or to Caltrans District 11, 4050 Taylor Street, MS 242, Attn: San Li, San Diego, CA 92110. Please include the name and title of the contact person for your agency.




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Bruce L. April  
Deputy District Director, Environmental  
Caltrans, District 11

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6/10/20  
Date

## Notice of Preparation – Attachment A

**Title:** The San Diego – Coronado Bay Bridge Suicide Deterrent Project (Project)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to reduce suicides and suicide attempts while also reducing the closures of the Bridge due to these events.

**Need:** Although official figures have not been maintained since its opening in 1969, it is widely believed that there have been approximately 400 deaths by suicide that have occurred from the San Diego - Coronado Bridge on State Route 75. After the Golden Gate Bridge, it is recognized as the second most frequently used bridge for suicide in the states. The Bridge does not have a permanent physical suicide deterrent system. The standard operating procedure for suicide attempts is closure of the Bridge.

The Bridge has the highest concentration of fatalities for a spot location on the state highway system in Caltrans District 11 (San Diego and Imperial Counties) due to deaths by suicide. Fatalities caused by suicide do not qualify under current Highway Safety Improvement criteria and are not eligible for HSIP funding.

The existing Transportation Management Systems (TMS) elements on the Bridge consist of six cameras controlled exclusively by California Highway Patrol (CHP) staff stationed at the Bridge Toll Plaza in Coronado. When CHP staff is not available at the Toll Plaza, the cameras cannot be repositioned and are no longer effective for monitoring activity on the bridge. In addition, existing camera locations do not provide full coverage of the bridge and surrounding areas.

Non-physical suicide deterrence measures have been implemented on the Bridge along with four-inch spikes installed on top of the bridge rail in early 2019 as an interim measure. However, multiple suicides and suicide attempts have still occurred from the Bridge. Many of these have resulted in a complete closure of the Bridge, sometimes for hours, requiring those traveling to or from Coronado Island, Naval Air Station North Island, and the Naval Amphibious Base, to reroute by way of the Silver Strand, a 23-mile detour adding 30 to 60 minutes of travel time per vehicle per incident. SR-75 is part of the Strategic Highway Network which provides defense access, continuity, and emergency capabilities for movement of personnel and equipment in both peace and war times.

**Location:** The San Diego – Coronado Bay Bridge, Glorietta Toll Plaza, and the I-5/SR-75 Interchange (SD 75 PM R20.1/R22.3 and SD 5 PM R13.8/R14.3).

**Description:** The Project proposes to install a permanent physical suicide deterrent on the San Diego – Coronado Bay Bridge (Bridge) in San Diego County. The Project also proposes to install minor improvements to the transportation management system (TMS) elements at the Glorietta Toll Plaza, the Bridge, and the I-5/SR-75 Interchange.

**Alternatives and Design Variations:** Based on the extensive preliminary alternative development process, there are currently a total of three (3) build alternatives and a no build alternative. The build alternatives are categorized by impacts to the existing bridge structure and include the following:

- A horizontal barrier alternative,
- A vertical barrier alternative that will be constructed on the existing bridge railings, and
- A vertical barrier alternative that will be constructed on new bridge railings.

The two (2) vertical barrier alternatives also include design variations such as a wire mesh fence, pivoting wire mesh fence, sliding vertical cable fence, reverse folding wave, vertical net, and horizontal cable fence. As of now, the horizontal barrier alternative only includes one design variation which is a horizontal net.

## Notice of Preparation – Attachment A

**Probable Environmental Effects:** It is anticipated that installation of a physical suicide deterrent system may result in environmental impacts in the following areas:

Historical Resources: The Bridge has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and therefore it is considered a historical resource. The Project may adversely affect the character defining features of the Bridge that contribute to its historic significance.

Visual/Aesthetics: The Bridge is part of an officially designated State Scenic Highway, State Route 75. The bridge provides desirable coastal views of the City of San Diego and the City of Coronado. The Project may alter the visual resources for roadway users and roadway neighbors and may create adverse visual impacts.

Biological Resources: Several types of waterfowl and migratory birds, including the endangered California least tern, use the San Diego Bay. The Project may affect these species flying close to the bridge deck.

Coastal Resources: The entirety of the Bridge lies within the Coastal Zone and is afforded protection by the Coastal Act. Coordination with the California Coastal Commission will be conducted and impacts to coastal views and bridge aesthetics; access to coastal resources; and environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) will be analyzed.

Hazardous Materials/Waste: The paint on the Bridge may contain hazardous levels of heavy metals including zinc and lead. The Bridge will also be surveyed and tested for asbestos which if present and disturbed will be considered a hazardous material. A containment system will be implemented for the disturbance or removal of hazardous materials and waste.