



Project Name: State Route (SR) 37 Flood Reduction Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 04-MRN-37-PM R11.2 to 13.8
EA: 04-4Q320
EFIS ID: 0419000376

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS**

FOR

**BUILD RESILIENCY TO THE EFFECTS OF 2130 SEA LEVEL RISE AND
STORMWATER OVERTOPPING ONTO STATE ROUTE (SR) 37 FROM POST MILE
(PM) R11.2 TO 13.8 IN MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15093), and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

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

- Aesthetics

As described in the FEIR prepared for the State Route (SR) 37 Flood Reduction Project, the Project would result in significant impacts to Aesthetics that cannot be reduced to a less than significant level by feasible mitigation measures. These significant, unavoidable impacts include:

- Detracting from the scenic vista of the surrounding environment, due to the increased dominance of the roadway with the extension of the causeway structure, with the additional support bents and columns.
- Degrading the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings, due to the elevated roadway becoming the dominant visual feature from a public view.

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

Caltrans finds that the significant, unavoidable adverse impacts identified in the FEIR for this Project are outweighed by the benefits of the Project.

Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to build resiliency to the effects of projected 2130 SLR and stormwater overtopping onto SR 37 from PM R11.2 to PM 13.8.

Need



According to the projections in the *SR 37 Transportation and Sea Level Rise Corridor Improvement Plan*, the Project area is the most vulnerable to SLR primarily due to its low elevation and reliance on levees and berms to provide flood protection for the highway. Projections from the *SR 37 Segment A PIR Sea Level Rise and Flooding Risk Assessment and Shoreline Evaluation* (AECOM 2021) show that the levee segments in the vicinity of Novato Creek are within an area containing low mudflats and emergent marsh that would be submerged during a storm surge event, potentially exposing the levees to open water and waves from the Bay (AECOM 2021). In addition, the Novato Creek Bridge is exposed to both riverine and coastal flood hazards under current and future conditions with SLR (AECOM 2021). Many of the levees are privately owned and were not constructed to protect SR 37 from flooding. Instead, protection of SR 37 is an indirect benefit of the levees. Caltrans does not have a role in managing or maintaining the levees in the surrounding area. The Project area will flood during a 10-year storm surge event and may be permanently inundated around the year 2050 with projected roadway flooding depths ranging up to 5 feet (Caltrans 2021e). For more information, please see Section 1.2.2 of the FEIR.

Build Alternative

The Build Alternative proposes to address recurring stormwater overtopping on the highway, which causes highway closures, disruption to local and regional travel patterns, and economic activity in the region. The Build Alternative would meet the purpose and need by building resiliency against flooding and projected 2130 projected SLR, and would elevate the existing highway onto a causeway. In addition, the Build Alternative would not increase vehicular capacity and, therefore, would not increase vehicle miles traveled in the region. The Build Alternative would continue to provide accessibility and mobility across the region. Caltrans selected the Build Alternative as the Preferred Alternative after careful consideration of the public comments.

David Ambuehl FOR

Dina A. El-Tawansy

District Director
California Department of
Transportation
NEPA/CEQA Lead Agency

David Ambuehl

Signature

01/30/2024

Date