Notice of Preparation

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies

(Address)

From: California Department of Transportation, District 7, Division of Environmental Planning

100 S Main Street, MS 16A

Los Angeles, CA 90012

(Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans D-7) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (☐ is ☒ is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Ron Kosinski, Deputy District Director, Division of Environmental Planning D-7 at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: I-10 ExpressLanes Extension

Project Applicant, if any:

Date March 30, 2022

Signature Robert J. Wang

Title Senior Environmental Planner

Telephone (213) 266-3822

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

I-10 ExpressLanes Extension PA/ED (EA 354310)

Project Description

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 7 (D7) proposes to address High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) degradation, improve mobility, provide multi-modal travel options, and address the ExpressLane gap on I-10 between I-605 and Los Angeles/San Bernardino County Line through the conversion of the existing HOV lane into an High Occupancy Toll Lane (HOT)/ExpressLane with the possible addition of a second ExpressLane or HOV lane in each direction.

This proposed project will improve safety, enhance regional connectivity, promote equitable and sustainable multi-modal travel options, encourage carpooling and transit, improve trip reliability, minimize degradation of the general purpose and HOV lanes, and increase vehicle and person throughput.

Caltrans will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project which will assess the following proposed alternatives: 1) no build; 2) the conversion of the existing HOV lane into an ExpressLane/HOT lane in each direction; 3) the conversion of the existing HOV lane to dual ExpressLanes/HOT lanes in each direction; or 4) the addition of a second HOV lane to the existing single HOV lane in each direction.

Caltrans will be the lead agency for the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Need

The deficiencies on I-10 between I-605 and Los Angeles (LA)/San Bernardino (SB) County Line (Project) are summarized below:

- The existing High Occupancy Lanes (HOV) lanes on I-10 (in Eastbound [EB] and Westbound[WB] directions) around I-605 and between SR-57 to LA/SB County line result in travel speeds below 45 miles per hour (mph)[1] during the peak periods.
- All modes of traffic (vehicular, truck and buses) in the existing mixed flow lanes on I-10 (in EB and WB directions) between I-605 and LA/SB County line experience higher travel times and lower trip reliability during the peak periods.
- A gap in the I-10 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, also known as ExpressLanes, will exist on I-10 (in EB and WB directions) between I-605 and LA/SB County line when the I-10 ExpressLanes in San Bernardino County are completed in 2023.

Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to provide efficient operation of the ExpressLanes and HOV network, improve safety, enhance mobility and regional connectivity along I-10. The project aims to accomplish the following objectives:

- Reduce degradation of HOV/HOT[1] lanes operation in accordance with FHWA regulations.
- Promote equitable and sustainable multi-modal travel options, advance equity by providing additional funding opportunities to implement related projects and facilitate future improvements to enhance livability along I-10.
- Improve travel times, increase trip reliability, maximize vehicle and person throughput[2], and enhance safety and mobility by incorporating active traffic management and intelligent transportation system strategies.
- Address the gap between Metro's existing I-10 ExpressLanes and San Bernardino County Transportation Authority's (SBCTA's) I-10 ExpressLanes facility.
- Provide interregional continuity and consistency with Metro's Countywide Express Lanes Strategic Plan, Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG's) 2020 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), and the California Transportation Plan 2050 (CTP 2050).

Location of Study Area

The study area includes portions of the cities of El Monte, Industry, Baldwin Park, West Covina, Covina, San Dimas, Walnut, Pomona, Claremont, Montclair and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County.

Project Alternatives

The project will consider one no-build and three build alternatives

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[1]According to California HOV Facilities Degradation Report and Action Plan dated 2019 and published in December 2020. A degraded facility is defined as one that does not meet minimum average operating speed of: 45 miles per hour (MPH) for 90 percent of the time over a 180-day monitoring period during morning and evening weekday peak hours (or both), in the case of a HOV facility with a speed limit of 50 MPH or greater; or not more than 10 MPH below the speed limit in the case of a facility with a speed limit of less than 50 MPH. If the operation of an HOV facility that allows HOTs or low emission and energy-efficient vehicles becomes degraded, authorities must take necessary actions, such as limiting or discontinuing the use of HOV facilities by the subject vehicles, or increasing the price paid by non-exempt vehicles for access to HOV lanes. 23 U.S.C. 166(d)(2).

[2] Person throughput is defined as the number of people traveling in a lane.

➢**Alternative 1 (No Build)**

This alternative would not include any project improvements on I-10 within the project limits. Existing freeway, ramps, and arterial roadway configurations would remain unchanged, except for routine roadway maintenance and current and future approved improvements.

➢**Build Alternative 2 – One ExpressLane/(HOT Lane)(Non-standard Lane and Shoulder Widths)**

This build alternative would convert the existing HOV lane in EB and WB directions of I-10 within the project limits to an ExpressLane/HOT and include below items.

- Restriping of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions to provide one 11' wide ExpressLanes, 2' wide buffer, four 11' to 12' wide GP lanes, 10' wide inside and outside shoulders, and auxiliary lanes (as needed) between on-ramp and off-ramp.
- Widening of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions, at few locations to provide a weave lane for ExpressLane ingress/egress and also provide appropriate stopping sight distance at the horizontal curve locations. The I-10 freeway widening would also require realignment of the on-ramps and off-ramps at some of the locations.
- Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, and utility and drainage improvements at the I-10 freeway widening locations.
- Dynamic pricing would be considered in the ExpressLane to ensure the trip reliability and increased traffic flow. Installation of the toll and communication infrastructure and installation of overhead signs would be required.

➢**Build Alternative 3 – Two ExpressLanes/HOT (Non-standard Lane and Shoulder Widths)**

This build alternative would convert existing HOV lane to an ExpressLane/HOT and add a second ExpressLane/HOT in EB and WB directions of I-10 within the project limits and include below items.

- Restriping and widening of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions to provide two 11' wide ExpressLanes, 2' wide buffer, four 11' to 12' wide GP lanes, 10' wide outside shoulder, varying width for inside shoulder, and auxiliary lanes (as needed) between on-ramp and off-ramp. The I-10 freeway widening would also require realignment of the on-ramps and off-ramps in EB and WB directions.
- Additional widening of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions, at few locations to provide a weave lane for ExpressLane ingress/egress and also provide appropriate stopping sight distance at the horizontal curve locations.
- Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, and utility and drainage improvements at the I-10 freeway widening locations.

- Dynamic pricing would be considered in the ExpressLane to ensure the trip reliability and increased traffic flow. Installation of the toll and communication infrastructure and installation of overhead signs would be required.

➢**Build Alternative 4 – Two HOV Lanes (Non-standard Lane and Shoulder Widths)**

This alternative would maintain the existing HOV lane and add a second HOV lane in EB and WB directions of I-10 within the project limits and include below items.

- Restriping and widening of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions to provide two 11’ wide HOV lanes, 2’ wide buffer, four 11’ to 12’ wide GP lanes, 10’ wide outside shoulder, varying width for inside shoulder, and auxiliary lanes (as needed) between on-ramp and off-ramp. The I-10 freeway widening would also require realignment of the on-ramps and off-ramps in EB and WB directions.
- Additional widening of the existing I-10 freeway in EB and WB directions, at few locations to provide a weave lane for HOV ingress/egress and also provide appropriate stopping sight distance at the horizontal curve locations.
- Other improvements include construction of retaining walls and sound walls, as well as utility and drainage improvements at the I-10 freeway widening locations.

➢**Other Features in the Build Alternatives**

All the build alternatives would consider opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities, incorporate complete streets elements, upgrade/add park and ride facilities, promote carpooling and transit, increase transit services, and implement infrastructure electrification and TSM/TDM components to improve transportation system performance etc.

Potential Environmental Effects

Various environmental and community resources are known to exist within the limits of the study area and will be studied in the EIR. Environmental effects anticipated for study include, but are not limited to: Land Use, Growth, Community Impacts, Utilities and Emergency Services, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, Visual/Aesthetics, Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources, Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff, Hydrology and Flooodplains, Geology/Soils/Seismicity/Topography, Paleontology, Hazardous Waste/Materials, Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change, Noise, Energy, Biological Environment, and Cumulative Impacts.

Public Scoping Meetings

The formal scoping period will begin on April 25th, 2022. And will close on June 10th, 2022. Metro and Caltrans will hold virtual public scoping meetings to provide and overview of the project, summary of the environmental process and issues to be studies and receive input regarding environmental issues and suggested scope content of the EIR. The virtual scoping meetings will be held on:

- Wednesday, May 4th, 2022 from 12:00pm-2:00pm
- Thursday, May 5th, 2022 from 6:00pm-8:00pm
- Saturday, May 7th, 2022 from 10:00am-12:00pm

The links for the virtual public scoping meetings, as well as further information can be found on the project website at www.metro.net/i10extension. Scoping comments can be submitted via regular mail, email, online via comment form, or by phone.

Mail comments to:

Ronald Kosinski
Caltrans District 7
Division of Environmental Planning (Project ID # 35431)
100 S. Main St., MS 16A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email comments to i10extention@metro.net
Submit comments online at www.metro.net/i10extension
Submit comments via phone at (213) 922-2110
Scoping comments must be submitted prior to 5:00pm on June 10th, 2022.

Project Location Map