

**Notice of Preparation**

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To: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address) (Address)

**Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_ at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Applicant, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# **SR-39 Reopening Project (EA 07-34770)**

## **Project Description**

State Route-39 (SR-39) is a two-lane highway connecting the San Gabriel Valley to the Angeles Crest Highway. Caltrans proposes to rehabilitate and reopen a 4.4-mile segment of SR-39 from post mile 40.0 to 44.4, within the Angeles National Forest, in Los Angeles County. The restored connection could be accessible to public highway traffic throughout the year, with seasonal closures during times of inclement weather. This segment of SR-39 has been closed to public highway traffic since 1978 as the roadway is regularly damaged by landslides, flooding, falling rocks, and forest fires. In February 2003, the closed highway was opened to emergency crews after a Caltrans study showed reopening it would not harm wetlands, air and water quality, natural vegetation, or threatened plants and animals. Maintenance activities have included the removal of rocks and debris, the cleaning of drainage culverts, and the erection of a dirt berm. With these past improvements, the roadway is passable, but only open to emergency service vehicles, and it is constricted as it approaches its northerly terminus. The proposed project would reconstruct the 4.4 mile stretch of roadway by installing roadway features to prevent future slides from damaging the roadway.

Caltrans will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project which will evaluate options for reopening the highway.

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 need for this project is based on the poor and degrading condition of the existing roadway on this segment of SR-39. The current conditions continue to degrade and may pose a safety hazard to maintenance crews and other users of the facility. Restoring and reopening the closed segment of SR-39 is also needed to bring this roadway into compliance with the California Streets and Highway Code, Section 91 and 100 which mandates that Caltrans shall improve and maintain state highways as provided in code, and that Caltrans shall monitor the cumulative impacts of fragmented gaps in the State Highway System (SHS) to identify safety and long-term maintenance issues. With the implementation of the proposed project, the safety concerns would be resolved via rehabilitation of the roadway and its appurtenant facilities, and a regional traffic circulation connection would be restored in the reopening of this segment of SR-39 to provide enhanced access for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and other emergency personnel during search and rescue activities and in reducing response times.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to restore access and provide a through-traffic connection between I-210 and SR-2, in order to enhance access for fire suppression forces, search and rescue, and emergency response personnel, including the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. It also aims to improve the safety and operation of the roadway, while preserving the integrity of the existing facility. Consistent with Caltrans' Complete Streets policy (DD 64-R2), this project would also improve access for patrons of the numerous recreation areas within the national

forest and provide an economic benefit to the forest and local businesses. All of this would be done in a way that avoids impacting the endangered bighorn sheep that utilize the area.

## Project Alternatives

The project will consider one (1) No-Build alternative and five (5) build alternatives.

- **Alternative 1 - No-Build**  
The 'No-Build Alternative' proposes to maintain the existing conditions of the roadway without any improvements.
- **Alternative 2 - Evacuation Route (Minimum Build)**  
This alternative proposes limited roadway restoration. Access to the roadway would be strictly for emergency service responders and maintenance access. The roadway would continue to be closed to public highway traffic.
- **Alternative 3 - Active Transportation Access (shuttle and bicycle path facilities)**  
This alternative proposes to restrict access to the roadway to recreational related activities (e.g., enjoying vista views, hiking, biking, picnicking, camping, fishing, etc.) and allow only onsite shuttle service to operate and ferry national forest visitors through the restricted roadway adhering to a maximum speed of 15 mph and exercising extreme caution at well-marked wildlife crossings. This alternative also proposes two sustainable public parking areas (at PM 40.0 & PM 44.4) to be constructed for visitors to park their vehicles and bikes. The main structural features include one major viaduct structure, two rock-sheds, and six soldier pile retaining walls.
- **Alternative 4 - Full Opening**  
This alternative proposes to rehabilitate and reopen the closed segment of SR-39 to public traffic and provide unrestricted access and a through-traffic connection between I-210 and SR-2. A roundabout feature is also proposed at the SR-2/SR-39 intersection. No parking lots are proposed for this alternative. The main structural features include one major viaduct structure, two rock-sheds, three viaduct/wildlife crossing structures, wildlife fencing, and six soldier pile retaining walls.
- **Alternative 5 - Viaduct Construction**  
This alternative proposes to construct a 4.4-mile-long standard two-lane elevated viaduct structure adjacent to the existing roadway. The continuous elevated viaduct would bypass the slide area, connect SR-39 to SR-2, and allow wildlife, slide debris, and water runoff to pass underneath the highway. The proposed viaduct section would consist of a 10-foot-wide outside shoulder and a 12-foot-wide lane in each direction. This alternative would restore public highway traffic connecting SR-39 to SR-2.
- **Alternative 6 – Single Travel Lane**  
This alternative proposes to construct a single travel lane having a total roadway width of 20 feet (12-foot travel lane with a 4-foot-wide shoulder on each side of the travel lane). Main features include three viaduct/wildlife crossing structures and wildlife fencing. The lane would be shared by all traffic with limited speeds and room to pull over and allow on-coming vehicles to pass safely.

## Potential Environment Effects

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

## Public Scoping Meeting

A virtual scoping meeting will be held on **December 15, 2022, at 6:30 PM** to provide you an opportunity to obtain first-hand project information and to express your comments and concerns about the proposed project.

Please visit <https://tinyurl.com/sr-39scoping> or scan the code to register for this important meeting.



All comments received will become part of the project record and will provide valuable input to our environmental and design personnel. **Scoping comments must be submitted by Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Comments can be submitted via regular mail, email, or at the scoping meeting.

Mail comments to:

Karl Price  
Division of Environmental Planning (Project EA 07-34770)  
California Department of Transportation, District 7  
100 South Main Street, MS 16A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Email comments to: [karl.price@dot.ca.gov](mailto:karl.price@dot.ca.gov)

If you have any questions, please contact Karl Price, Division of Environmental Planning, at (213) 266-3822 or [karl.price@dot.ca.gov](mailto:karl.price@dot.ca.gov)

# SR-39 REOPENING PROJECT LOCATION MAP

