



DRAFT

Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 05-SLO-46-PM 30.7 to 32.4

EA/Project Number: EA 05-1C150 and Project Number 0512000070

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the City of Paso Robles, proposes to construct, in two phases, an overcrossing and partial cloverleaf interchange at the intersection of State Route 46 East and Union Road/Paso Robles Boulevard. The project site is in north-central San Luis Obispo County (post mile 30.7 to 32.4).

Phase 1 of the project would convert a portion of State Route 46 from an at-grade intersection at Union Road/Paso Robles Boulevard into a new grade-separated overcrossing with an associated north-south extension of Union Road over State Route 46 (referred to as Union Road Overcrossing/Extension). North of State Route 46, Paso Robles Boulevard would be realigned to accommodate the proposed Union Road Overcrossing/Extension. The existing Union Road would be closed and removed, and a new connection with State Route 46 (referred to as Union Road Connector) would be constructed to intersect with the new Union Road west of the proposed Union Road Overcrossing/Extension.

Two roundabouts would be constructed at the following locations to connect the proposed north-south Union Road Overcrossing/Extension with local roadways and accommodate future roadway improvements:

- 1) North of State Route 46, a roundabout would be constructed at the eastern terminus of the proposed extension of Tractor Street to the northern terminus of the proposed Union Road Overcrossing/Extension.
- 2) South of State Route 46, a roundabout would be constructed within the central portion of the proposed Union Road realignment and the southern terminus of the proposed Union Road Overcrossing/Extension.

Additional State Route 46 improvements would include Huer Huero Creek Bridge widening and median improvements, including removing the existing State Route 46 median and building new medians on State Route 46 beneath the new Union Road Overcrossing/Extension and at the intersection of State Route 46 and Airport Road. State Route 46 access restrictions (right-turn in and right-turn out only) would occur at the existing Paso Robles Boulevard and Airport Road.

Phase 2 of the project would expand upon Phase 1 and would include the construction of a partial cloverleaf interchange with access ramps. The Union Road

Overcrossing/Extension would be widened, as well as the roundabout approaches, approached from Union Road to the south and Tractor Street to the north. Both roundabouts would be restriped from one lane to two lanes. A collector-distributor, which would be constructed along State Route 46, would extend from east of the State Route 46 westbound exit to the State Route 46 and Union Road interchange through the west side of the southbound right-turn entrance from Golden Hill Road to westbound State Route 46 at the Golden Hill Road and State Route 46 intersection.

The Huer Huero Creek Bridge Overcrossing would be widened to accommodate the westbound collector-distributor. State Route 46 access restrictions would occur at the existing Union Road, Paso Robles Boulevard, Airport Road, and Golden Hill Road as the Union Road Connector, Paso Robles Boulevard, and Airport Road would become a cul-de-sac. Additional State Route 46 improvements would include the construction of a new median at the intersection with Golden Hill Road, which would eliminate the existing signal control and restrict movement to allow eastbound and westbound right-turn-in and right-turn-out movements.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision regarding the project is final. This Mitigated Negative Declaration is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no effect on land use and planning and mineral resources.

The proposed project would have less than significant effects to agriculture and forest resources, air quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the proposed project would have less than significant effects to visual/aesthetic resources, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils (paleontological resources), noise (vibration), and tribal cultural resources:

- Visual/Aesthetics-1 requires the minimization and screening of nighttime construction lighting and the inclusion of pedestrian-scale lighting.
- Visual/Aesthetics-2 requires landscaping that is compatible with the existing landscaping in the project vicinity and includes Complete Street features.
- Visual/Aesthetics-3 requires aesthetic treatments for hardscape features, compatible structural themes, and the use of contour grading and slope rounding techniques to minimize conventional cut landform appearance.
- Natural Communities-1 requires construction activities to avoid and minimize potential impacts to sensitive natural communities.

- Natural Communities-2 requires the restoration of disturbed project areas through the planting of locally native grass seeds and plugs or other native plant species consistent with the habitat that has been disturbed.
- Natural Communities-3, Natural Communities-5, and Natural Communities-6 require construction activities to avoid and minimize potential impacts to Huer Huero Creek and to protect aquatic habitats.
- Natural Communities-4 requires construction activities to avoid and minimize potential impacts to sensitive habitats and special-status species near the project area.
- Wetlands and Other Waters-1 requires the implementation of a restoration plan that provides a minimum 3-to-1 replacement ratio for permanent impacts and a 1-to-1 replacement ratio for temporary impacts to Huer Huero Creek and associated valley foothill riparian land cover.
- Wetlands and Other Waters-2 requires protection in perpetuity for 0.02 acre of impacts to seasonal wetlands (0.046 acre of preservation) or other acceptable programs or onsite restoration.
- Plant Species-1 through Plant Species-3 require preconstruction and construction activities for the avoidance and minimization of potential impacts to plant species of concern.
- Animal Species-1 requires preconstruction activities for the avoidance and minimization of potential impacts to California legless lizards.
- Animal Species-2 requires preconstruction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to coast horned lizards.
- Animal Species-3 requires preconstruction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to San Joaquin coachwhips.
- Animal Species-4 and Animal Species-5 require construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to the San Joaquin coachwhip.
- Animal Species-6 through Animal Species-9 require preconstruction and construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to raptors and other migratory birds.
- Animal Species-10 and Animal Species-11 require preconstruction and construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to roosting bats.
- Animal Species-12 requires preconstruction and construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to American badgers.
- Threatened and Endangered Species-1 through Threatened and Endangered Species-4 require preconstruction and construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to San Joaquin kit fox dens.
- Threatened and Endangered Species-5 through Threatened and Endangered Species-15 require preconstruction and construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to San Joaquin kit foxes.
- Threatened and Endangered Species-16 requires the conservation of 3 acres of foraging habitat to each acre impacted to compensate for potential impacts to San Joaquin kit foxes and associated habitat areas.

- Invasive Species-1 requires construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts associated with invasive species.
- Cultural Resources-1 requires adherence to the project's Programmatic Agreement between Caltrans and the California State Historic Preservation Officer to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to cultural resources and tribal cultural resources.
- Cultural Resources-2, Cultural Resources-3, and Cultural Resources-4 require construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential vibration impacts to the Johnson House.
- Paleontology-1 and Paleontology-2 require construction activities to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to paleontological resources.
- Paleontology-3a and Paleontology-3b require the implementation of a Paleontological Mitigation Plan for the collection and curation of any fossils potentially discovered during construction and preparation of a final Paleontological Mitigation Report to compensate for potential impacts to paleontological resources.

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Date