

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**  
**Interstate 215/McCall Boulevard Interchange Improvements Project**  
**Availability of Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

**Date:** March 29, 2024

**To:** Public Agencies and Interested Parties

**From:** California Department of Transportation

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Interstate 215/McCall Boulevard Interchange Improvements Project

In discharging its duties under Section 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in coordination with the City of Menifee (City), will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), compliant with Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines (Division 6 of Chapter 3 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, hereinafter the “CEQA Guidelines”), for the Interstate 215/McCall Boulevard Interchange Improvements Project (also known as “the Project”). In accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines, Caltrans has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) to provide the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), responsible and trustee agencies, and other interested parties with sufficient information describing the Project and its potential environmental effects.

The NOP will be circulated for a 33-day public review and comment period that begins on March 29, 2024, and ends on May 1, 2024, at 5:00 pm. Caltrans welcomes public input during the review period. If Caltrans has not received either a response or a well-justified request for additional time by a responsible agency or OPR by the end of the review period, Caltrans may presume the responsible agency has no response (CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b)(2)).

Please provide any written comments that you would like Caltrans to consider, along with the name of the appropriate contact person in your agency, to either of the contacts shown below.

Carlos Geronimo  
Principal Engineer  
City of Menifee  
29844 Haun Road  
Menifee, CA 92586

Malisa Lieng  
Senior Environmental Planner  
California Department of Transportation  
464 W 4th St, MS 823  
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Comments may also be submitted via email to Carlos Geronimo at [cgeronimo@cityofmenifee.us](mailto:cgeronimo@cityofmenifee.us) or Malisa Lieng or Teresa Howard at [I-215McCallProject@dot.ca.gov](mailto:I-215McCallProject@dot.ca.gov). **All comments must be**

received no later than May 1, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. For more information, please visit the Project website at:

<https://cityofmenifee.us/325/Environmental-Notices-Documents>  
<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-8/district-8-news>

## **PUBLIC MEETING**

A public scoping meeting is scheduled during the minimum 30-day public scoping period, which began with the release of this Notice of Preparation. The public scoping meeting is meant to provide an opportunity for public comment, identify public and agency concerns, and define issues that need to be examined in the Environmental Impact Report. No decision(s) will be made on the project itself.

### **Meeting Details:**

When: Tuesday, April 30, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Where: City Council Chambers, 29844 Haun Road, Menifee, CA 92586

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

The Project limits on Interstate 215 (I-215) begins at approximately Post Mile 20.1 and extends along I-215 to approximately Post Mile 21.5. The Project also extends along McCall Boulevard from Encanto Drive to Bradley Road. (See Figures 1 and 2 attached).

## **PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

Currently, McCall Boulevard contains geometric deficiencies, is anticipated to result in operational breakdown in the future, which will result in transit delays, and contains a gap in pedestrian/bike/NEV connectivity. Additionally, queuing onto I-215 results in the number of accidents along the ramps being higher than the Statewide average. The purpose and need of the Project are to increase storage capacity of the I-215 off-ramps, improve existing interchange geometry to bring to current standards, provide continuous facilities for pedestrian, NEV and bicycle traffic, reduce future transit delays, improve goods movement along McCall Boulevard, and increase equity by improving commute time and emergency response time.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the City of Menifee (City), proposes to construct the Project. The Project includes the widening of McCall Boulevard and the existing structure over I-215, adding a bike/Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) lane on both sides of the road/bridge, adding sidewalk on the north side of the road/bridge, modifying the associated on- and off-ramps, and improving the nearby intersections of McCall Boulevard/Bradley Road and McCall Boulevard/Encanto Drive in the City of Menifee, California. The existing Type L-1 Tight Diamond interchange configuration would not be modified. Caltrans is the lead agency under CEQA.

The following two alternatives are being studied in the EIR for this project:

- No-Build Alternative is Alternative 1.
- Build Alternative is Alternative 2 – Type L-1 Tight Diamond.

### **Alternative 1: No Build**

The “No Build” Alternative is considered the base case scenario and proposes that no improvements be implemented on the mainline facility and the existing overcrossing would not be widened. Without the project, the existing geometric deficiencies would not be corrected, conditions would continue to worsen with increased traffic volumes, and the queuing onto the mainline would continue to increase collision rates. In the No Build scenario, there would be an increase in congestion, specifically focused on the McCall Boulevard/Bradley Road and McCall Boulevard/Encanto Drive intersections, and level-of-service in the region would continue to deteriorate, which would result in the operational breakdown of both McCall Boulevard and I-215. The gap in pedestrian/bike/NEV connectivity and delays with public transit would continue to hamper the community’s use of alternative modes of transportation.

### **Alternative 2: Build Alternative**

The proposed project improvements include widening McCall Boulevard, the I-215 overcrossing, and the I-215 ramps. The existing Type L-1 Tight Diamond interchange configuration would not be modified. Additional improvements include signal modifications at the proposed northbound and southbound ramps intersections, the Bradley Road intersection, and the Encanto Drive intersection.

McCall Boulevard would be widened from two to three lanes in each direction from Sun City Boulevard to approximately 700 feet east of the Encanto Drive. The six through lanes would continue east where the ultimate facility is a six-lane Urban Arterial road. In the westbound direction, two lanes would be added/dropped at the Bradley Road intersection to match the four-lane facility west of the interchange in accordance with the City’s General Plan designation, which is a 4-lane Major road.

The I-215/McCall Boulevard bridge overcrossing would be widened to include two left turn lanes, with a painted median to provide shared storage for both directions of travel along McCall Boulevard. The widening would also include a bike/Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) lane and sidewalks on both sides of the road/bridge and sidewalks on the north side of the road/bridge, which would extend along McCall Boulevard to the Encanto Drive and Bradley Road intersections to connect with existing and future planned bike/NEV and pedestrian facilities. These proposed facilities are anticipated to connect to future projects that will provide Class II bicycles lanes along the roadway delineated by pavement striping and signage dedicated for bicycle travel along McCall Boulevard from Valley Boulevard in the west to Briggs Road in the east, consistent with the City General Plan.

A 1,500-foot deceleration lane would be constructed at the I-215 northbound off-ramp to improve operation of the I-215 mainline. The I-215 northbound and southbound on-ramps would be reconstructed and widened from one to two lanes with ramp metering to allow for additional storage and reduce backspill onto McCall Boulevard. The I-215 northbound and southbound off-ramps would be partially reconstructed to provide four turn lanes to allow for additional storage

and reduce backspill onto I-215. All existing ramp skew angles and curb returns at McCall Boulevard would be realigned and improved to meet Caltrans' design standards to improve safety and accommodate the turn movements of Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) trucks. The McCall Boulevard intersection improvements at Bradley Road and Encanto Drive include additional turn-lanes and standard pedestrian facilities such as two curb ramps and median pedestrian refuge islands. Landscaping features may be included as part of the project in the interchange.

During construction, temporary closures of the on-ramps and off-ramps may be necessary during construction; however, the improvements are largely located near the intersections and would be staged to minimize disruptions. The bridge overcrossing will be widened to north to allow for construction to be staged and ensure the existing four lane bridge would continue to be utilized by vehicles during construction. No closures of McCall Boulevard over I-215 are anticipated. Similarly, the local roadway improvements along McCall Boulevard, Encanto Drive, and Bradley Road would be staged to minimize disruptions and require minimal closures during construction.

The Build Alternative would impact areas in all four interchange quadrants and additional right of way may be required to accommodate the proposed improvements. Due to the new widening, the Build Alternative would temporarily impact businesses and commercial developments along both sides of McCall Boulevard from Sun City Boulevard to Encanto Drive during construction and may require some sliver right-of-way acquisitions; however, no substantial or negative economic impact to businesses is anticipated.

The improvements associated with the widening of McCall Boulevard would also require utility relocations. While the majority of the utilities within the project area are underground, there may be impacts to some utility poles and above ground boxes/vaults due to the widening improvements. Any existing utilities within the project area requiring relocation would be coordinated with the owner and operator of the utility.

Drainage in the project area is collected by various storm drain facilities and conveyed to the Sun City Channel, a regional flood control facility operated and maintained by the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. The Sun City Channel, which is located between Encanto Drive and I-215, conveys flows from east to west and traverses under I-215 via a reinforced concrete box (RCB) culvert, which is currently at capacity and has a history of flooding in the Avila Apartment Homes community. Since the interchange project is anticipated to increase the impervious surfaces in the area, the project may attenuate additional runoff tributary to the Sun City Channel/RCB through the use of detention/retention basins within the interchange.

Other project activities needed to support the design of the project include potholing and geotechnical investigations within the existing roadway and proposed improvement locations.

## **REQUIRED APPROVALS**

Approvals for the Project include, but are not limited to the following:

- Construction General Permit Compliance (Clean Water Act Section 402)
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Assembly Bill 52 Native American Tribal Coordination
- Right of Way

## POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

As required by CEQA, the EIR will describe existing conditions and evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Project and a reasonable range of alternatives, including the No-Build alternative. It will address direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. The EIR will identify feasible mitigation measures, if available, to reduce significant and potentially significant impacts. The following environmental topic areas are preliminarily anticipated to be evaluated in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Climate Change
- Community Impacts
- Cultural Resources
- Cumulative Impacts
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Growth
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Visual
- Wildfire

At this time, Transportation related impacts are the only anticipated potentially significant environmental effects due to the project increasing capacity along McCall Boulevard; therefore, the Build Alternative is anticipated to result in an increase of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Any other alternatives would also result in an identical increase of VMT due to increasing capacity along McCall Boulevard, and for this reason, the Build Alternative is the only alternative being evaluated in the CEQA environmental process.