



**CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)**

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): DN 199 Roundabout

DIST-CO-RTE: 01-DN-199

PM/PM: T0.8

EA: 01-0L990

Federal-Aid Project Number:

Project Description

The Del Norte (DN) 199 Roundabout is a 201.010 Safety Improvements project located in Del Norte County on United States (US) Route 199, post mile (PM) T0.8, at the intersection with Elk Valley Cross Road (EVCR), see Attachment A Vicinity Map. This project proposes to improve safety by reducing the frequency and severity of collisions at this suburban four-way intersection by constructing a single-lane, four-legged roundabout.

See Continuation Sheet.

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

Not Applicable – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency

Not Applicable – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:

Exempt by Statute. (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)

Categorically Exempt. Class 1: 15301.c. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)

No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the [SER Chapter 34](#) for exceptions.

Covered by the Common Sense Exemption. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Julie East

Print Name

Signature

06/13/2024

Date

Project Manager

David Melendrez

Print Name

Signature

06/13/2024

Date



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

Not Applicable

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

23 USC 326: Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- 23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(4)
23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)
Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans

23 USC 327: Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Julie East
Print Name Signature Date 06/13/2024

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

David Melendrez
Print Name Signature Date 06/13/2024

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): Pending
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: Pending

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Continuation sheet:

Project Description Continued:

Additional features include concrete splitter islands on the east and west side of the roundabout, a shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists, an improved lighting system, flashing beacons, and drainage work. This project is programmed in the 2022 SHOPP with a scheduled construction year of 2026.

The preferred alternative proposes to construct a 110-foot ICD, four-legged, single-lane roundabout at the intersection of US 199 and Elk Valley Cross Road.

Proposed Scope of Work

- The center of the proposed roundabout would be located at the approximate center of the existing intersection
- A 20 foot wide circulatory roadway constructed with jointed plain concrete pavement
- A 15 foot wide raised truck apron
- A 10 foot wide buffer zone and 10 foot (20 foot diameter) central island
- An 8 foot wide shared use path would be constructed around the roundabout with jointed plain concrete pavement, with 10 foot wide crosswalks at each leg. Splitter islands in the crosswalks would provide a refuge area for pedestrians.
 - This path would transition to 5 feet in width and be open to bicycles only beyond the westernmost crosswalk approaching US 101, where pedestrians are prohibited
- Vehicle speeds would slow prior to entry into the roundabout using reversing horizontal curves on the highway approaches
- Raised splitter islands and a non-mountable curbing beginning at least 200 feet in advance of the roundabout would provide a visual cue to drivers that road conditions are changing
- Lanes would be 12 feet wide on the approaches and departures, tapering to 17.5 – 18 feet near the roundabout entries and exits
- Outside shoulders would be 2 feet near the roundabout entries and exits and taper out to 8 feet at the end of the curbs & splitter islands.
- Inside shoulders would vary from 1-3 feet along the curbs and splitter islands.
- An existing 24" diameter concrete culvert would be replaced with a 30" diameter culvert and the associated drainage ditch would be regraded to construct the shared-use path
- Channel drains would be constructed in curbs and sidewalks to direct water to the vegetated roadside areas
- New Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) would be limited and most pavement work would consist of cold planning with 0.15 feet of HMA overlay
- The splitter islands and truck aprons would have stamped or colored concrete for aesthetic treatments
- Rock blanket would be used at the buffer areas around the central island and between the shared used path and roadway



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

- The central island design would include a combination of stamped or stained concrete, decorative boulders, and low maintenance plants.
- The two existing lights would be replaced with 8 new lights installed outside of the shared use path
- A traffic camera would be installed at the northwest corner of the roundabout
- New electrical service would be installed near the existing service pole
- Advanced flashing beacons would be installed on the US 199 approaches to notify vehicles of pedestrians within the roundabout
- New conduit would be installed to all of the proposed electrical features
- The adjacent intersection at Parkway Drive/Kings Valley Road and US 199 would be restriped to further reduce conflict points and encourage vehicles to use the roundabout instead of this intersection.
 - All existing striping would be removed, micro-surfacing would be applied, and new striping and markings placed

Right-of-Way:

There is no need for additional right-of-way on this project, as all work would occur within the existing operational right-of-way.

Anticipated Permits:

- It is possible that no permits will be needed for this project.
- We are currently anticipating the need for a NCRWQCB 401 certification and US Army Corps 404 Nationwide Permit.

Climate Change Assessment:

The Environmental Division has evaluated this non-capacity increasing project for GHG emissions and other climate change impacts. It has determined that the project would not cause a significant impact on GHG emissions because this project would not increase roadway capacity or induce new vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

In addition:

- This project includes construction greenhouse gas reduction measures.
- The project design includes adaptation or climate resilience features.
- The project is not located in a floodplain or other location at risk of riverine flooding.
- The project is not located in the Coastal Zone or Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta or a location at risk of future sea level rise impacts.
- This project would not increase wildfire conditions and is not in a high fire hazard severity zone.
- By nature of this projects safety improvements, it would improve accessibility.

The following Standard Measures and Best Management Practices have been included as part of the project:

The following measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to the environment and community:



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Aesthetics/Visual Resources

- AR-1:** Aesthetic treatment (such as tribal patterns) to the bridges/guardrails/retaining walls would be included to address context sensitivity.
- AR-2:** Temporary access roads, construction easements, and staging areas that were previously vegetated would be restored to a natural contour and revegetated with regionally-appropriate native vegetation.
- AR-4:** Where feasible, construction lighting would be limited to within the area of work.
- AR-5:** Where feasible, the removal of established trees and vegetation would be minimized. Environmentally sensitive areas would have Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) installed before start of construction to demarcate areas where vegetation would be preserved and root systems of trees protected.

Biological Resources

BR-1: General

Before start of work, as required by permit or consultation conditions, a Caltrans biologist or Environmental Construction Liaison (ECL) would meet with the contractor to brief them on environmental permit conditions and requirements relative to each stage of the proposed project, including, but not limited to, work windows, drilling site management, and how to identify and report regulated species within the project areas.

BR-2: Animal Species

- A. To protect migratory and nongame birds (occupied nests and eggs), if possible, vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur between September 16 and January 31). If vegetation removal is required during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. The buffer would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.
- C. Pre-construction surveys for active raptor nests within one-quarter mile of the construction area would be conducted by a qualified biologist within one week prior to initiation of construction activities. Areas to be surveyed would be limited to those areas subject to increased disturbance due to construction activities (i.e., areas where existing traffic or human activity is greater than or equal to construction-related disturbance need not be surveyed). If any active raptor nests are identified, appropriate conservation measures (as determined by a qualified biologist) would be implemented. These measures may include, but are not limited to, establishing a construction-free buffer zone around the active nest site, biological monitoring of the active nest site, and delaying construction activities near the active nest site until the young have fledged.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

- D. To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the Corvidae family which include jays, crows, and ravens), no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container daily and disposed of at an approved waste facility at least once a week. Also, on-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.
- I. Artificial night lighting may be required. To reduce potential disturbance to sensitive resources, lighting would be temporary and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction. Use of artificial lighting would be limited to Cal/OSHA work area lighting requirements.

BR-3: Invasive Species

Invasive non-native species control would be implemented. Measures would include:

- Straw, straw bales, seed, mulch, or other material used for erosion control or landscaping would be free of noxious weed seed and propagules.
- All equipment would be thoroughly cleaned of all dirt and vegetation prior to entering the job site to prevent importing invasive non-native species. Project personnel would adhere to the latest version of the *California Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Cleaning/Decontamination Protocol (Northern Region)* for all field gear and equipment in contact with water.

BR-4: Plant Species, Sensitive Natural Communities, and ESHA

- A. Seasonally appropriate, pre-construction surveys for sensitive plant species would be completed (or updated) by a qualified biologist prior to construction in accordance with *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018).
- B. A Revegetation Plan would be prepared which would include a plant palette, establishment period, watering regimen, monitoring requirements, and pest control measures. The Revegetation Plan would also address measures for wetland and riparian areas temporarily impacted by the project.
- C. Prior to the start of work, Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging would be installed around sensitive natural communities, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare plant occurrences, intermittent streams and wetlands and other waters, where appropriate. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.
- F. Upon completion of construction, all superfluous construction materials would be completely removed from the site. The site would then be restored by regrading and stabilizing with a hydroseed mixture of native species along with fast growing sterile erosion control seed, as required by the Erosion Control Plan.

BR-5: Wetlands and Other Waters

- B. In-stream work would be restricted to the period between May 15 and October 15, per the NCRWQCB 401 permit to protect water quality and



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

vulnerable life stages of sensitive fish species (see also **BR-2L**). Construction activities restricted to this period include any work below the ordinary high water. Construction activities performed above the ordinary high water mark of a watercourse that could potentially directly impact surface waters (i.e., soil disturbance that could lead to turbidity) would be performed during the dry season, typically between June through October, or as weather permits per the authorized contractor-prepared Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP), and/or project permit requirements.

C. See **BR-4** for Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) information.

Cultural Resources

- CR-1:** Caltrans would coordinate with the Elk Valley Rancheria, Tolowa Dee-ni, and the Tolowa Nation Tribes and incorporate measures to protect tribal resources, including potential work windows associated with tribal ceremonies.
- CR-3:** If cultural materials are discovered during construction, work activity within a 60-foot radius of the discovery would be stopped and the area secured until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).
- CR-4:** If human remains and related items are discovered on private or State land, they would be treated in accordance with State Health and Safety Code § 7050.5. Further disturbances and activities would cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. Pursuant to California Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner would notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who would then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD).

Human remains and related items discovered on federally-owned lands would be treated in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (23 USC 3001). The procedures for dealing with the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, or sacred objects on federal land are described in the regulations that implement NAGPRA 43 CFR Part 10. All work in the vicinity of the discovery shall be halted and the administering agency's archaeologist would be notified immediately. Project activities in the vicinity of the discovery would not resume until the federal agency complies with the 43 CFR Part 10 regulations and provides notification to proceed.

Geology, Seismic/Topography, and Paleontology

- GS-2:** In the unlikely event that paleontological resources (fossils) are encountered, all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery would stop, the area would be secured, and the work would not resume until appropriate measures are taken.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- GHG-1:** Caltrans Standard Specification "Air Quality" requires compliance by the contractor with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality (Caltrans Standard Specification [SS] 14-9).
- GHG-2:** Compliance with Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), which includes restricting idling of diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles and equipment with gross weight ratings of greater than 10,000 pounds to no more than 5 minutes.
- GHG-3:** Caltrans Standard Specification "Emissions Reduction" ensures construction activities adhere to the most recent emissions reduction regulations mandated by the California Air Resource Board (CARB) (Caltrans SS 7-1.02C).
- GHG-4:** Use of a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to minimize vehicle delays and idling emissions. As part of this, traffic would be scheduled and directed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along the highway during peak travel times.
- GHG-5:** All areas temporarily disturbed during construction would be revegetated with appropriate native species, as appropriate. Landscaping reduces surface warming and, through photosynthesis, decreases CO₂. This replanting would help offset any potential CO₂ emissions increase.
- GHG-6:** Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained during project activities.

Hazardous Waste and Material

- HW-1:** Per Caltrans requirements, the contractor(s) would prepare a project-specific Lead Compliance Plan (CCR Title 8, § 1532.1, the "Lead in Construction" standard) to reduce worker exposure to lead-impacted soil. The plan would include protocols for environmental and personnel monitoring, requirements for personal protective equipment, and other health and safety protocols and procedures for the handling of materials containing lead.
- HW-3:** If treated wood waste (such as removal of sign posts or guardrail) is generated during this project, it would be disposed of in accordance with Standard Specification "Treated Wood Waste."

Traffic and Transportation

- TT-2:** The contractor would be required to schedule and conduct work to avoid unnecessary inconvenience to the public and to maintain access to driveways, houses, and buildings within the work zones.
- TT-3:** A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) would be applied to the project.

Utilities and Emergency Services

- UE-1:** All emergency response agencies in the project area would be notified of the project construction schedule and would have access to US Highway 199 throughout the construction period.
- UE-2:** Caltrans would coordinate with utility providers to plan for relocation of any utilities to ensure utility customers would be notified of potential service disruptions before relocation.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

UE-3: The project is located within the Moderate CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). The contractor would be required to submit a jobsite Fire Prevention Plan as required by Cal/OSHA before starting job site activities. In the event of an emergency or wildfire, the contractor would cooperate with fire prevention authorities.

Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

WQ-1: The project would comply with the provisions of the Caltrans Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (Order 2022-0033-DWQ), effective January 1, 2023. If the project results in a land disturbance of one acre or more, coverage under the Construction General Permit (CGP) (Order 2022-0057-DWQ) is also required.

Before any ground-disturbing activities, the contractor would prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (per the Construction General Permit Order 2022-0057-DWQ) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) (projects that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre) that includes erosion control measures and construction waste containment measures to protect Waters of the State during project construction. For SWPP projects (which are governed according to both the Caltrans NPDES permit and the Construction General Permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES and CGP and the corresponding requirements of those permits are adhered to. For WPCP projects (which are governed according to the Caltrans NPDES permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES permit is adhered to.

The SWPPP or WPCP would identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater; include construction site Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control sedimentation, erosion, and potential chemical pollutants; provide for construction materials management; include non-stormwater BMPs; and include routine inspections and a monitoring and reporting plan. All construction site BMPs would follow the latest edition of the *Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks: Construction Site BMPs Manual* to control and reduce the impacts of construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed.

The project SWPPP or WPCP would be continuously updated to adapt to changing site conditions during the construction phase.

Construction may require one or more of the following temporary construction site BMPs:

- Any spills or leaks from construction equipment (e.g., fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, and grease) would be cleaned up in accordance with applicable local, state, and/or federal regulations.
- Accumulated stormwater, groundwater, or surface water from excavations or temporary containment facilities would be removed by dewatering.
- Water generated from the dewatering operations would be discharged on-site for dust control and/or to an infiltration basin, or disposed of offsite.
- Temporary sediment control and soil stabilization devices would be installed.



CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM

- Existing vegetated areas would be maintained to the maximum extent practicable.
- Clearing, grubbing, and excavation would be limited to specific locations, as delineated on the plans, to maximize the preservation of existing vegetation.
- Vegetation reestablishment or other stabilization measures would be implemented on disturbed soil areas, per the Erosion Control Plan.
- For SWPPP projects (which are governed according to both the Caltrans NPDES permit and the Construction General Permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES and CGP and the corresponding requirements of these permits are adhered to. For WPCP projects (which are governed according to the Caltrans NPDES permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES permit is adhered to.

WQ-2: The project would incorporate pollution prevention and design measures consistent with the *2016 Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan*. This plan complies with the requirements of the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order 2022-0033-DWQ).

The project design may include one or more of the following:

- Vegetated surfaces would feature native plants, and revegetation would use the seed mixture, mulch, tackifier, and fertilizer recommended in the Erosion Control Plan prepared for the project.
- Where possible, stormwater would be directed in such a way as to sheet flow across vegetated slopes, thus providing filtration of any potential pollutants.