



An Employee-Owned Company

September 24, 2024

Ms. Masha Landau
County of San Diego, Department of Public Works
Environmental Services Unit
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 410
San Diego, CA 92123

Reference: Community Impact Assessment Memorandum and Attached Checklist for the Riverford Road Roundabouts Project (County Contract No. 560871, RECON 9009-30A)

Dear Ms. Landau:

A Federal Highway Administration Community Impact Assessment Memorandum and Scoping Checklist have been prepared for the Riverford Road Roundabouts Project (project) (Attachment 1). Completion of the checklist determined that the project would not have any adverse effects on the community. Therefore, a separate Community Impact Assessment study is not required.

County of San Diego (County), Department of Public Works proposes the project to construct roundabouts at two intersections, in Lakeside, San Diego County. The northern intersection is located at the on- and off-ramps of State Route 67 (SR-67) and Riverford Road and the southern is at the Riverford Road and Woodside Avenue intersection. Both intersections currently experience traffic congestion with vehicle queues at the SR-67 ramps. The roundabouts would improve the overall traffic efficiency, circulation, and ease congestion. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is considered a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Responsible Agency because they are a public agency who also has responsibility for carrying out or approving the project (i.e., the project located within the Caltrans' right-of-way of this SR-67 interchange).

The project is located within the unincorporated community of Lakeside in eastern San Diego County, at the SR-67/Riverford Road interchange, north of Interstate 8 (Figure 1). The interchange of SR-67 and Riverford Road is located between post miles R3.7 and R4.2. An aerial photograph of the survey area is provided in Figure 2.

The northern roundabout would replace a two-way stop-controlled intersection at the on-/off-ramps of SR-67 southbound and Riverford Road (northern roundabout). To accommodate the roundabout, the intersection would be widened. The on-/off-ramps to/from SR-67 southbound would be realigned and widened. The existing North Woodside Avenue connection to Riverford Road would be relocated via construction of a new leg that will connect and convey existing traffic flow in and out of the northern roundabout.

The southern roundabout would replace the existing three-way, signal-controlled intersection at Woodside Avenue and Riverford Road. To accommodate the roundabout, the intersection would be widened, and its elevation lowered to meet existing elevation of the Riverford Road. Existing northbound SR-67 off-ramp connection to Woodside Avenue would be relocated via construction of a new leg, conveying exiting traffic flow into the southern roundabout.

The project would also construct Class II bicycle lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and shared-use pathways (for pedestrian and bicyclists) to create a "complete street." Rapid flashing beacons would be installed at multiple crosswalks (southbound SR-67 off-ramp at northern roundabout and northbound SR-67 off-ramp at southern roundabout). The proposed improvements are shown in Figure 3.

Stormwater drainage facilities (e.g., vegetated and/or concrete swales) and water quality treatment features (e.g., biofiltration basins) would be constructed to capture and treat roadway stormwater. Drainage facilities and water quality improvement features would vary in size and may include vegetation/plantings and permeable landscape. New curb cuts, gutters, storm drain inlets, headwalls, channels, and sidewalk underdrains would be added and convey stormwater to the proposed water quality treatment features. Additionally, dirt slopes underneath bridge overpasses would be stabilized, and the project would add multiple streetlights to help illuminate both roundabouts for drivers' safety. Riverford Road between both intersections would be widened to accommodate the shared-use pathways and stormwater drainage facilities. Retaining walls would be constructed where grading cannot be achieved and range in height from 3.5 feet to 25 feet, depending on location.

Construction of the proposed improvements would be phased over approximately one to two years, with the potential for temporary full closure of both project intersections. Traffic detours would be in place as-needed and would utilize the adjacent Winter Gardens SR-67 Interchange, Channel Road, and Riverside Drive.

Rock removal via blasting and/or other rock fracturing methods are likely; however, access to adjacent residences and businesses in the vicinity of the project, as well as for emergency vehicles, would be maintained at all times.

The proposed project would be constructed largely within the existing County's and Caltrans' right-of-way, with slight encroachment onto the City of Santee's right-of-way. In addition, temporary and permanent property acquisitions are proposed to facilitate project design and construction needs.

The project site consists of paved highways, on- and off-ramps to SR-67, roadways, and associated intersections. The San Diego River is located north of the project site and flows east to west under the Riverford Road bridge, outside of the project site. The elevation within the project site ranges from 370 feet above mean sea level on the north side to 400 feet above mean sea level on the south side. The project site is bordered by undeveloped land, disturbed land, and commercial development to the north and southwest. Residential developments and single-family homes are to the southeast and southwest, respectively. Within the project site, there is a mix of developed land consisting of paved roads and highways, medians and highway embankments, a park and ride parking lot, manufactured slopes, and undeveloped land between the developed portions.

Land Use

The project proposes changes within the SR-67 Interchange (two intersections) and not to the entire roadway corridor. The project would be constructed largely within existing County and Caltrans right-of-way, with slight encroachment onto the City of Santee's right-of-way in the southwestern corner of the project. In addition, the following temporary and permanent property acquisitions are proposed to facilitate project design and construction needs:

- Full acquisition of Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 379-010-3200, located immediately north of the northern roundabout and south of North Woodside Avenue. This parcel is currently undeveloped, zoned General Commercial, and would potentially transition to become a Public/Semi-Public Facilities. It is being acquired to accommodate construction of a water quality improvement basin in this area.
- Road right-of-way easement for APN 379-010-3000.
- Temporary Construction Easements (TCE) and/or Slope and Drainage Easements (SDE) for APNs: 379-010-3000, 382-011-2600, 382-210-2600, 382-210-2700, 382-210-4300, 382-260-1400, 382-310-5400, 382-310-1200, 381-170-5700, and 382-310-2400. These TCEs and SDEs would not result in any changes to the surrounding land use pattern or alter potential future development of these parcels.

As a transportation facility improvements project, it would be consistent with the Lakeside Community Plan's Circulation Element goal to "meet the present and future needs for moving people and goods with a balanced transportation system that perpetuates Lakeside's rural atmosphere." The project would improve overall traffic efficiency, circulation, and ease congestion without increasing capacity. The project would also be consistent with the Lakeside Community Circulation Element's goals to fully integrate pedestrian and bicycle movement within a major collector street system by introducing multimodal shared-use paths.

The project site does not possess any farmland or timberland. Therefore, the project would not adversely affect land use and is generally consistent with the overall goals and policies of the County of San Diego General Plan and Lakeside Community Plan.

Growth

The project proposes enhancements to a portion of Riverford Road and not to the entire roadway "corridor," as defined by the Office of Planning and Research. Changes to the existing circulation network would be limited to replacement of two controlled intersections with roundabouts, addition of shared-use paths, ramp connectors and construction of water quality improvement features. Therefore, the overall traffic circulation patterns in the surrounding vicinity would remain unchanged. The project would not introduce new roadway or highway access that would result in or invite unplanned growth.

Additionally, the project does not propose any housing that could increase population or housing supply, nor would it introduce new commercial or retail uses that could increase employment or business activity. Similarly, while the project would relocate existing utilities to accommodate the project, the project would not introduce any new utility infrastructure or services that would provide for new development opportunities. Additionally, the properties along Riverford Road and Woodside Avenue are largely built out and changes to the County's General Plan to increase development in this area are not proposed or expected. Therefore, the project would not induce unplanned growth, nor would it put pressure on existing utilities and services within the surrounding area.

Community Character and Cohesion

The project proposes changes to a portion of Riverford Road. Project features have been designed to be consistent with applicable County of San Diego safety standards. The proposed roundabouts would provide for continued fire, ambulance, and police access as exists under current conditions. The project would construct crosswalks and shared-use pathways, which would serve both pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle paths, creating a "complete street" and multimodal connectivity. The crosswalks and shared-use pathways would enhance quality of life and health benefits by facilitating walking and bicycling. The project would not result in a permanent increase in ambient noise, and permanent streetlights associated with the roundabouts would be appropriately sited and shielded to avoid affecting adjacent residential land uses. If nighttime construction is required, necessary lighting would also be appropriately sited and shielded to avoid affecting adjacent residential land uses.

The project would also preserve existing vegetation to the extent possible and would utilize a context-sensitive landscaping plan consisting of native, drought-tolerant trees. Similarly, the project would utilize architectural features that would blend with the surrounding visual and natural environment. The seven water quality treatment features that would be introduced by the project would utilize mulch, vegetative plantings, and permeable landscape to provide a natural appearance that would blend with the surrounding rural character. The six retaining walls that would be introduced by the project would include architectural features and textures that would minimize apparent wall heights, as well as create shadows and visual interest, to blend these features with the surrounding environment. The proposed retaining walls would also surface texturing to discourage graffiti.

Although SR-67 is designated as a scenic highway, there are no formally designated scenic vistas that span the project site. Furthermore, the current visual environment is dominated by SR-67, and replacement of two existing intersections with roundabouts would be consistent with the existing visual character of this transportation facility. The existing intersections are located below grade of the SR-67 bridge that passes over Riverford Road, and the proposed roundabouts would be located at similar elevations or lower (the southern roundabout). Therefore, the project would not adversely affect views from residences surrounding the project site. Furthermore, viewers traveling on SR-67 would have a limited duration of the roundabouts' view due to the speed of travel on the highway, existing intersections are located below grade of the SR-67 bridge that passes over Riverford Road, and the proposed roundabouts would be located at similar or lower elevations. Viewers traveling on North Woodside Avenue, Woodside Avenue, and Riverford Road would also have a limited duration of the roundabouts' view due to the speed of travel.

The San Diego River, north of the project site, is not designated as a wild or scenic river. The project would not physically impact an existing greenbelt containing a multi-use trail associated with the San Diego River. The project would increase recreation opportunities by introducing shared-use pathways that would allow for bicycle travel. Furthermore, the project would not include additional development beyond these roadway improvements that would affect the rural character of Lakeside.

Overall, introduction of the proposed roundabouts would be consistent with the existing visual character of the SR-67/Riverford Road interchange. The proposed project would not disrupt community character or cohesion, as it would not cause a separation between residential areas, businesses, or community facilities. The project would not adversely affect property values, and the project would improve quality of life by introducing options for non-vehicular travel and easing congestion compared to the existing condition, which would improve air quality. Finally, project improvements would be limited to transportation facilities and would not otherwise affect health or have any affect related to crime.

Economic Impacts

The project proposes changes to a small portion of Riverford Road and would not remove or restrict access to or visibility of any existing businesses. As described under land use section above, the only full property acquisition would consist of a vacant parcel, and the proposed TCEs and SDEs would not adversely affect any businesses. Furthermore, acquisition of the vacant parcel and the TCEs and SDEs would not adversely affect the tax base

Once completed, the roundabouts would improve the overall traffic efficiency, circulation, and ease congestion compared with existing conditions. Therefore, the project would not adversely affect business opportunities due to changes in traffic patterns or visibility, nor would it result in permanent out of direction travel for businesses. No impacts to economic activity are anticipated, as access to businesses will be prioritized and maintained during construction.

Relocations and Environmental Justice

The project is located in an unincorporated community of Lakeside, in eastern San Diego County and would introduce benefits that would be beneficial to this community. The project would foster livable and healthy communities that promote social equity through the following project components. The project would construct crosswalks and shared-use pathways, which would serve both pedestrians and bicyclists, creating a "complete street" and multimodal connectivity in this section of Riverford Road. The crosswalks and shared-use pathways would enhance the quality of life and health benefits by facilitating walking and bicycle options, which would benefit public health and safety. Additionally, the project would provide more accessible connections for a community with diverse

land uses and connect residents to existing recreational trails and areas around the San Diego River north of the project site.

Furthermore, the project would ease traffic congestion compared to the existing condition, which would also improve air quality in the neighborhood and, in turn, potentially improve public health. The seven proposed water quality improvement features would contribute to the improvement of the overall water quality in the area. Finally, the project would not impact any residential housing, displace any people from their homes, nor reduce availability of affordable housing.

Traffic and Transportation/Bicycle and Pedestrian

Changes to the existing circulation network would be limited to replacement of two controlled intersections with roundabouts, and overall circulation patterns in the surrounding vicinity would remain unchanged. The project focuses on improving efficiency of operations by improving traffic circulation, safety, and adding multimodal connectivity, without increasing roadway capacity.

Construction of the proposed improvements would be phased over approximately one to two years, with the potential for temporary full closure of both project intersections. If constructing over approximately one year, this would likely involve complete roadway closures at both intersections as well as nighttime work. If constructing over approximately two years, this would likely involve nighttime closures at both intersections and some limited complete roadway closures. Traffic detours would be in place as-needed and would utilize the adjacent Winter Gardens/SR-67 Interchange, Channel Road, and Riverside Drive. Utilization of these traffic detours would ensure continuity of vehicular access to residences and businesses in the area, as well as continued access for fire trucks, ambulances, and police for the duration of construction.

Although the Park & Ride lot located on the corner of Riverford Road and Woodside Avenue may lose several parking spaces for six months during project construction, this loss would be temporary and the Park & Ride lot would be restored to full capacity once project construction is completed. No public transit services currently exist on Riverford Road or this section of the Woodside Avenue and therefore would not be affected by the project.

Community Outreach

As part of the project, the County will conduct public outreach to inform and engage potential stakeholders about the project. The County will initially meet with the community and other stakeholders (residents, community-based organizations, planning groups, businesses, etc.) in March 2024, to introduce the project and the project milestones/timeline. The County intends to meet with the same stakeholders again in early summer of 2024, before the CEQA environmental document is published and prior to the public review period (estimated in the summer 2024), to discuss project components in more detail and explain potential environmental impacts, minimization and avoidance measures, and mitigation.

The County will host a public meeting held both in-person and virtually, for the community to have the opportunity to have multiple options for attendance. The County will also plan to review the demographics of the community, to determine the most common languages in the community in the event that translation and interpretation services are needed.

The meetings will be held in-person (with the virtual option available) at a convenient location, such as a community hub like a library, and during the times convenient for the general public. The County will also send mailers to the community within and in the vicinity of the project, including the neighboring community of Winter Gardens, as the

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roadway detour will likely utilize that SR-67 exit. The mailers will provide information about the project and inform stakeholders how and when the meeting will be held, as well as alternative ways of providing feedback.

The County will also prepare a detailed Community Outreach Plan to guide the public outreach process and document the results. The Community Outreach Plan is an internal document that outlines the community engagement goals, strategies, activities, and evaluation methods.

The County's objective is to be transparent about the project and inform the residents, organizations, and other community members of the project design and potential impacts, solicit input and concerns, and incorporate it into the project to the extent feasible.

Sincerely,

Nick Larkin
Senior Project Manager

NHL:WEL:sh:jg

Attachment



 Project Location

FIGURE 1
Regional Location



 Project Boundary

FIGURE 2

Project Location on Aerial Photograph

Map Source: Parsons



FIGURE 3
Proposed Improvements

ATTACHMENT 1

Community Impact Assessment Checklist

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT Scoping Checklist

Land Use

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The project would affect, or be inconsistent with, relevant state, regional or local plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The project would result in a lost of prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of state or local importance, or lands covered under the Williamson Act. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The project would result in a loss of timberland. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The project would impact a park or other recreational facility (including trails, bikeways, etc.). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Growth

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|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The location of where growth occurs would shift (introduction of access to a new undeveloped area). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Development opportunities would be influenced by the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The population would increase as a result of the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The housing supply, or employment or business activity, would increase as a result of project. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The capacity of other services, such as utilities or schools, would be pressured as a result of growth. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Related projects (often not transportation projects), including those of a state or local project in nature, would bring cumulative growth effects. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Community Character & Cohesion

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|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Health, safety, or crime would become worse. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public service delivery, such as fire, ambulance, police, or education would be disrupted. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community character (including aesthetics, lighting, and noise) would be noticeably changed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Property values and/or the quality of life would deteriorate. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Economic Impacts

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|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Businesses would be removed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Parking would be impacted. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Businesses would gain or lose opportunities because of changes in traffic patterns or visibility. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The project would result in out of direction travel to businesses. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Jobs or job opportunities would be changed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The tax base would be altered due to relocations and/or conversion of property to state use. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Construction of the project would affect the local economy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Relocations and Environmental Justice

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|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | People would be displaced from their homes. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The availability of affordable housing would be reduced. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Minority populations or low-income populations would be disproportionately affected. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Traffic & Transportation/Bicycle and Pedestrian

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|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Through traffic in a neighborhood would increase. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pedestrian and/or bicycle connectivity would be diminished. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |