



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1516, **Version:** 2

Department of Transportation recommending the Board take the following actions related to the U.S. 50/Ponderosa Rd/So. Shingle Rd Interchange Improvements Project, CIP 71333:

- 1) Adopt the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (IS/MND/EA/FONSI); and
- 2) Approve Build Alternative 1 as described in the IS/MND/EA/FONSI and revised per the attached Errata Sheet (Exhibit A). (Est. Time: 15 Min.) (Cont. 2/11/20, Item 18)

FUNDING: El Dorado County TIM Fee Program. The Project may also be eligible for state and federal grant funds.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The El Dorado County (County) Department of Transportation (Transportation) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), have prepared this California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (IS/MND/EA/FONSI) which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives considered for the U.S. 50/Ponderosa Rd/So. Shingle Rd Interchange Improvements (Project). The County is the CEQA lead agency, while Caltrans is the NEPA lead agency. The joint IS/MND/EA/FONSI is prepared in conformance with state and federal requirements. The recommended Board actions are based on the following findings:

- A) The joint CEQA/NEPA document, on file with the Clerk of the Board and on Transportation's website, <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/dot/Pages/ceqa.aspx>, was prepared pursuant to Public Resources Code §21000 et seq., State CEQA Guidelines, and Federal NEPA requirements under 40 CFR 1500-1508.
- B) There is no substantial evidence that the Project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment.
- C) The IS/MND/EA/FONSI reflects Transportation's independent judgment and analysis as CEQA lead agency for the County.

The U.S. Highway 50 (Hwy 50) Ponderosa Road Interchange was constructed in the 1960's as the primary access connection for the Shingle Springs community region to the then reconfigured Hwy 50. Since completion, growth in the area and increased travel along Hwy 50 has resulted in higher traffic volumes and associated congestion. This Project has been recognized as a priority in the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) since the early 2000's as a means to address existing traffic congestion and as necessary to accommodate expansion of residential and commercial uses provided for in the current General Plan.

The interchange and ramps and access roads operate at acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) with the projection that by 2035 LOS will be at F if no improvements are made and growth continues at

normal levels (No-Build Alternative). Under Alternatives 1 and 2 all intersections would operate at LOS D or better. Given the long lead time to obtain funding, apply for and acquire approvals/permits and prepare improvement plans, Transportation has endeavored to identify the improvements necessary to maintain acceptable LOS in the vicinity and perform the environmental analysis necessary to allow the Project to proceed if local, state or federal funding were to become available.

Transportation staff, with the assistance of design and environmental consultants, have worked in close coordination with CalTrans to develop an infrastructure improvement plan that would provide the necessary roadway and highway capacities and meet CalTrans design standards while fitting within the site constraints.

Project Purpose and Description: The Project will improve the interchange at Ponderosa Road and South Shingle Road and realign frontage roads at Durock Road, North Shingle Road, and Wild Chaparral Drive in Shingle Springs, California. The purpose of the Project is five-fold:

- 1) Address an existing operations problem;
- 2) Improve Levels of Service (LOS);
- 3) Maintain adequate LOS for main-line operations and existing access points to and from Hwy 50;
- 4) Improve multimodal mobility (e.g., bike and pedestrian) within and through the interchange; and
- 5) Provide for future traffic growth at this interchange, projected to occur from planned regional growth.

The environmental document evaluates four alternatives proposed for the Project:

1) Build Alternative 1 option proposes to widen the existing bridge from three to five lanes. It includes road widening and realignments of North Shingle and Durock roads. Wild Chaparral Drive remains in the existing condition which allows access to the park and ride lot adjacent to Wild Chaparral Drive and to the businesses and residences using this local road to access Ponderosa Road. Build Alternative 1 also includes adding turn pockets, providing acceleration/deceleration lanes, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) bypass lanes and ramp metering, and modifications to loop on- and off-ramps in both east and west directions. Utility relocations will pursue an undergrounding option where feasible. Build Alternative 1 meets the purpose and need of the Project and includes a project design exception approved by Caltrans for additional ingress and egress to the businesses off of Mother Lode Drive in the Project area.

2) Build Alternative 2 is similar to Build Alternative 1, but it would additionally realign the existing Wild Chaparral Drive connection to the north on Ponderosa Road and would create a new cul-de-sac at the existing connection to Ponderosa Road.

3) Build Alternative 3 would widen the existing overpass from three (3) to five (5) lanes. The Hwy 50 ramps and approaches would be widened to the point they conform to the local roads and/or ramp intersections. Local roads would not be widened under this alternative. Build Alternative 3 is characterized as a “minimum impact” build solution because it would require less right-of-way impacts compared with Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2; however, it would only minimally improve the degrading LOS situation in the Project area by 2035.

4) The fourth alternative is the No-Build Alternative which would maintain the existing facility. The No-Build Alternative does not address the current deficiencies or long-term traffic needs of the Hwy 50

corridor or the Ponderosa Interchange.

Construction: Construction would be scheduled once a funding commitment has been made and all approvals and permits have been obtained and improvement plans completed. The Project is shown in the current CIP to be funded with TIM fees with funding to be available sometime after FY 2030. If the BOS directed staff to advance fund the Project and that approvals/permits and design all proceed within normal time frames, the Project could begin construction in June 2030.

Mitigation Measures: Mitigation measures are added to the Project to reduce potential impacts to a level of insignificance. Avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are established in the Environmental Commitment Record (Appendix D) of the environmental document.

Public Notification: The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was advertised in the Mountain Democrat on January 26, 2018 and the entire document was posted on Transportation's website at <https://www.edcgov.us/government/dot/pages/CEQA.aspx>. A hard copy was available at the Placerville Library and at the Community Development Services building (front counter), located at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA. Individual notices were sent via US Mail to all property owners within one mile of the Project limits and to relevant agencies. The public review period began on January 26, 2018 and was extended an additional 30 days to March 26, 2018 to allow for a 60-day comment period.

Public Comments: The County received forty-three (43) public comments and worked with community members to address most of those comments through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and the El Dorado Council, Inc. and individual community members. As provided for in the MOU, comments addressed through the MOU were withdrawn from the record, leaving a total of nineteen (19) comments (See Exhibit A) received for consideration, including three (3) from public agencies, one (1) from a tribal entity, one (1) from a citizens organization, and fourteen (14) from individuals, including comment cards.

Response to Comments: Complete responses to each of the comments on record can be found in Exhibit B. As part of the MOU, Transportation sought and obtained approval from Caltrans for a project design exception to allow improved ingress and egress to the businesses off of Mother Lode Drive in the Project area. No additional impacts were identified that were not discussed in the IS/MND/EA/FONSI and no additional mitigation measures are required.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) The Board could choose not to adopt the IS/MND/EA/FONSI and approve the Project. Transportation would make adjustments as directed by the Board and bring this item back to the Board at a later date. This could potentially increase Project costs and delay delivery.
- 2) The Board could cancel the Project. No federal or state funds have been used on the Project to date. Therefore, canceling the Project would not require repayment of spent funds to a state or federal agency.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

On August 27, 2013 (Item 36), the Board approved Cooperative Agreement No. 03-03-0497 with Caltrans for the review and approval of the Project Study Report - Project Report for the Project. On February 11, 2014 (Item 37), the Board approved the advancement of the Project from the 20-year CIP to the 2013 CIP work plan. On May 8, 2018 (item 52), the Board approved the formation of a

new Underground Utility District in the area of Shingle Springs as part of the Project.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Prior to construction, resource agency permits may be required as follows:

- 1) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Section 404 Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit
- 2) Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board - Section 401 Water Quality Certification
- 3) California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Streambed Alteration Agreement
- 4) El Dorado County Air Quality Management District - Fugitive Dust Plan Approval

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Project is included in Transportation's adopted 2019 CIP approved by the Board on December 17, 2019 (Item 54). Adoption of this IS/MND/EA/FONSI and approval of the Project will not result in any change to Net County Cost.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

CONTACT

Rafael Martinez, Director
Department of Transportation