



Legislation Text

File #: 11-0448, **Version:** 1

Department of Transportation recommending the Board take the following actions pertaining to the Diamond Springs Parkway Project and the Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2006052125, prepared for that project:

1) Certify that:

a) The Environmental Impact Report on the Diamond Springs Parkway Project (consisting of the Draft Environmental Impact Report dated June 23, 2010, Traffic Information Reissuance dated July 7, 2010 and the Final Environmental Impact Report dated May 10, 2011) has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act;

b) The Board has reviewed and considered the information within the Environmental Impact Report prior to approving the project and finds the information adequate to approve the project;

c) The Environmental Impact Report reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the Board;

2) Adopt the Findings of Fact Related to the Certification of the Environmental Impact Report on the Diamond Springs Parkway Project (Legistar Attachment E);

3) Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan dated May 10, 2011 (Legistar Attachment F); and

4) Approve the Diamond Springs Parkway Project as described in this staff report and in the Environmental Impact Report. (Est. Time: 1 Hr.)

Fiscal Impact/Change to Net County Cost: N/A

Project Funding:

The Diamond Springs Parkway - Phase 1 Project, including SR-49 Phase 1 improvements, is included in the Adopted 2010 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and is funded by the 2004 General Plan Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Program (TIM) and the Missouri Flat Master Circulation and Funding Plan (MC&FP). Diamond Springs Parkway - Phase 2 Project (not including SR-49 Phase 2 improvements) is listed in the CIP as a future project and is funded by the TIM.

Background:

The Diamond Springs Parkway Project (Project), originally known as the Missouri Flat Pleasant Valley Connector (Connector), was initiated to improve traffic circulation, safety and operations through and around the historic town of Diamond Springs and has been in various stages of planning and design for the past 15 years. The connector concept was originally introduced to the public in 1997 with six alternate alignments. In 1997, the Board of Supervisors selected Alternative 3, a sweeping curved alignment connecting SR-49 to the Project, as the preferred alternative. Alternative 3 was subsequently included and programmatically analyzed as a transportation circulation component in the adopted MC&FP in 1998. In 2002, further analysis resulted in two feasible alternatives of the original six: Alternative 3 and Alternative 4. Alternative 4 proposes a "T" alignment connecting SR-49 to the Project with a 90 degree intersection rather than the sweeping curve alignment of Alternative 3. In 2004, the Connector was included in the 2004 General Plan as a regional transportation improvement. In April 2008, the Board recommended the Department of Transportation (Department) to select Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative. This Alternative was

also chosen by Caltrans as their preferred selection. The proposed Project's "T" intersection analyzed in this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is in the same location as the originally proposed Alternative 4.

Reason for Recommendation:

Project Location and Description:

The proposed Project is located south of the Missouri Flat Road/U.S. 50 Interchange, west of the City of Placerville, and north of the community of Diamond Springs. The Project itself would begin at Missouri Flat Road, approximately 500 feet southeast of Golden Center Drive, and proceed easterly creating a "T" intersection with SR-49/Diamond Road approximately 280 feet south of Bradley Drive. The Project also includes improvements to SR-49/Diamond Road, from Finch Road to the intersection of SR-49/Pleasant Valley Road. (Legistar Attachment I)

The Project includes the ultimate construction of approximately 4400 feet of new road; Diamond Springs Parkway (Parkway), from Missouri Flat Road to SR-49/Diamond Road as a four-lane, divided roadway in phases (see explanation of phase breakdown below). Construction also includes improvements and/or realignment of Missouri Flat Road, China Garden Road, Old Depot Road, Throwita Way, Truck Street, and Bradley Street and construction of a new Truck Street/Bradley Drive connector. SR-49/Diamond Road is proposed to be realigned and widened to a four-lane major highway. A new frontage road will be created on the existing roadway. The SR-49 improvements would require improvements and/or realignment of Black Rice Road, Happy Lane, and Lime Kiln Road.

Roadway improvements include travel lanes, turn pockets, three traffic signals, three bus turnouts, sidewalks, shoulders, bike lane, a Class I bike path along the west side of Missouri Flat Road to the future westerly extension of the El Dorado Multi-Use Trail (EDMUT), and a new parking lot for EDMUT trail users.

Projects that involve roadway construction, widening or improvement, often affect utilities located or potentially located within the right of way. As such, El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) proposes, as part of the Project, to install a new 18-inch waterline in the Parkway and upgrade existing 6-inch and 8-inch waterlines with a new 12-inch waterline in SR-49/Diamond Road from Pleasant Valley Road to Finch Road.

In addition to the roadway improvements, the County proposes the creation of two underground utility districts (one at Missouri Flat Road and China Garden Road and one along SR-49/Diamond Road between Pleasant Valley Road and Bradley Drive), or relocation of utility poles.

Objectives of Project:

As shown in Legistar Attachment D, the Traffic Information Reissuance (TIR) of the Draft EIR, Section 3.3, the Project Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1a. *Improve traffic safety and operations on portions of Pleasant Valley Road (SR-49) in the vicinity of Diamond Springs as provided in the County's 2004 General Plan (Policy 10.2.7.3) including:*

Provide parallel capacity for SR-49 between Missouri Flat Road and Diamond Road (SR-49) and

alternate access to US-50 via Missouri Flat Road to relieve traffic congestion and provide an acceptable level of service through the historic town of Diamond Springs to meet the General Plan Policy TC-1.

Provide a safe, efficient, and convenient roadway that meets the travel needs of people and goods.

Improve safety by reducing residential driveway access to Diamond Road (SR-49) between Pleasant Valley Road (SR-49) and Black Rice Road by provision of a frontage road.

Objective 1b. *Implement the Project as included in the County's 2004 General Plan (Policy 10.2.7.3) and the County's CIP in the most cost effective manner.*

Objective 1c. *Improve roadway and intersection capacities along Missouri Flat Road, south of US-50, to support the anticipated commercial/retail square footage development identified and planned for in the 1998 MC&FP and the 2004 El Dorado General Plan.*

Objective 1d. *Provide opportunities for improved bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities consistent with the 2004 El Dorado County General Plan and coordinate the construction of the Project with the El Dorado Multi-Use Trail.*

Objective 1e. *Protect natural resources, including local wetlands, riparian features, and oak woodlands by aligning the Project to avoid these features, to the extent feasible, by providing transportation facilities that cause the least amount of environmental damage and yield environmental benefits wherever feasible.*

The Project would provide parallel capacity to SR-49 and improve the level of service (LOS) of SR-49 to LOS E or better through 2030. Construction of the Project would also improve operations on a number of intersections to LOS E or better. Under existing conditions, the roadway segment of Pleasant Valley Road (SR-49/Main Street) between Missouri Flat Road and SR-49/Diamond Road is at LOS F which does not meet General Plan Policy TC-Xd. Two additional road segments, Missouri Flat Road south of Halyard Lane and Missouri Flat Road south of China Garden Road, would operate at LOS F under the Cumulative (2030) scenario without development of the Project or other transportation improvements.

Phasing:

Based on available funding and other considerations, the Project may be constructed in phases. If phasing is necessary, under Phase 1, the Parkway would be constructed as a 2-lane arterial road, with a median lane. Phase 1 improvements, pursuant to the Traffic Study, are forecast to be adequate for ten years or more, at least through 2020. Under Phase 2, the Parkway would be widened to four lanes.

SR-49 may also be constructed in phases. If phasing is necessary, under Phase 1, Diamond Road (SR-49) would initially be constructed as a major two-lane highway with 12-foot travel ways and 8-foot shoulders, with restricted left-turn movement from Lime Kiln Road and Black Rice onto SR-49. Phase 1 also includes the SR-49 frontage road improvements. SR-49 Phase 1 improvements are forecast to be adequate for nearly twenty years, until 2030. Under Phase 2, SR-49 would be widened to a major four-lane major highway. There is potential to advance sub-phases that will adequately address traffic operations.

For a complete Project description, refer to Legistar Attachment D, TIR Section 3.

EIR Process:

The Project has been analyzed pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines. All environmental impacts identified in the Draft EIR have been determined to be less than significant with the proposed mitigation measures summarized in the Project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) in Attachment E.

Agency and Public Notification and Input:

The Department distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR for the proposed Project on December 12, 2007. The NOP was distributed for a 30-day comment period that ended on January 18, 2008. The Department held an agency and public scoping meeting on the proposed Project on January 9, 2008 at the Firefighters Memorial Hall in Diamond Springs, California. The scoping meeting was an opportunity for agencies and the public to obtain information about the proposed Project and to provide input regarding the issues they wanted addressed in the Draft EIR. Comments about the NOP were considered in the preparation of the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR was then distributed to various public agencies, citizen groups, and interested individuals for a 45-day public review period, from June 23, 2010, through August 11, 2010. On July 7, 2010, the Department issued a subsequent Traffic Information Reissuance document containing corrections and additions to the Draft EIR and extended the public review period for both documents to August 23, 2010.

During the Draft EIR public review period, two public meetings were held by the Department on July 28, 2010 at the Diamond Springs Firefighters Memorial Hall to provide an overview of the proposed Project and the CEQA process. The meetings were intended to solicit input from the public regarding the Draft EIR. The public meetings were announced in the Notice of Availability (NOA) which was published in the Mountain Democrat, on June 23, 2010 and again on July 7, 2010. The NOA and Draft EIR were posted on the Department's website on June 22, 2010 and the Traffic Information Issuance was posted on July 7, 2010. Additional public meeting notification was posted on the Department's website, starting July 23, 2010. The NOA for the Draft EIR and Traffic Information Reissuance were mailed to nearly 500 property owners, agencies and individuals potentially affected by, or adjacent to, the proposed Project.

The two public meetings were attended by 61 people and the Department received 33 written comment letters. All comments have been responded to in the Final EIR. Most of the comments centered on noise, effects on downtown Diamond Springs, effects on the commenter's property in the vicinity (for more discussion, see Legistar Attachment G, Supplemental Staff Report). Following consideration of the comments received by the Department during the public review period, a Final EIR has been completed containing copies of all comments and the County's response to those comments.

The comment letters did not raise any additional impacts that had not previously been analyzed in the Draft EIR. However, in response to community concerns raised at the meetings and letters, the Project was revised to include additional sidewalks. The Project description originally included a sidewalk along Diamond Springs Parkway and provided connectivity from the proposed bus turnout on Diamond Road/SR-49 to the new intersection of SR-49/Diamond Springs Parkway. Several

comments requested continuous sidewalk, from Missouri Flat Road to Pleasant Valley Road, to be included in the Project. Due to the comments received, and for conformance with General Plan Policy TC-5, a sidewalk has been added along the east side of SR-49 and the proposed frontage road to provide continuous sidewalk within the Project area. Although sidewalks along Diamond Road/SR-49 are included in the Project, they are not included in the TIM and will need to be constructed as a condition of adjacent development or funded through other sources.

A discussion of major issues and public concerns, including non-CEQA issues, is provided in Legistar Attachment G, Supplemental Staff Report.

The Draft EIR and TIR and Final EIR are available on the Department's website at <http://www.edcgov.us/Government/DOT/CEQA.aspx>. A hard copy of each can be viewed at the Department's public counter located at 2850 Fairlane Court in Placerville.

Mitigation Measures: The County will adopt and implement a mitigation monitoring plan which includes any mitigation measures adopted in conjunction with the Project. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan is included as Legistar Attachment F. All mitigation measures have reduced identified potential impacts to a level of insignificance.

Project Construction: The Department will retain a construction contractor who would be responsible for compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, and ordinances associated with construction activities and for implementation of the adopted construction-related mitigation measures.

Action to be taken by the Department following Board approval:

- 1) The Department will file a Notice of Determination with the office of the County Recorder/Clerk.
- 2) The Department staff will proceed with the Project through completion of plans, specifications and estimates.
- 3) The Department will proceed with the formation of the two proposed underground utility districts.

Contact:

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Concurrences: County Counsel