

# DRISI

CALTRANS DIVISION OF RESEARCH,  
INNOVATION AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

# Research Notes

Executive

JUNE 2023

Project Title:  
Further Implications of Freeway  
Siting in California: An Equity,  
Geospatial, and Case Study  
Approach

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## Further Implications of Freeway Siting in California: An Equity, Geospatial, and Case Study Approach

This multidisciplinary project will examine the consequences of freeway construction on minority neighborhoods across California.

### WHAT IS THE NEED?

There is a need to further examine historical freeway placement throughout California and the nation due to harming impacts placed upon neighborhoods and communities of color and ethnicity. Impacts include higher air pollution and the health effects of air pollutants near freeways, past housing and business displacement, and barriers to neighborhood accessibility, especially for low-income populations.

### WHAT ARE WE DOING?

This research will investigate historical or still-existing communities that have been impacted by freeway development. The work will focus on three in-depth case studies of select communities of color that have been impacted by freeway construction through their neighborhoods. The three case study areas chosen in consultation with the Caltrans Office of Race and Equity, Caltrans Division of Research, Innovation and System Information, and Caltrans District Offices are Colton, Selma, and San Diego.

### WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The researchers will use a mixture of geospatial analysis and mapping, historical and archival research, and interviews, to create a better understanding of the influence of freeway siting and persistent effects that are felt in today's communities of color. The end-product will be a document depicting the trajectory of neighborhoods/communities impacted by the freeway systems.



DRISI provides solutions and knowledge that improves California's transportation system

## WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

This report and its accompanying communications will not only analyze the implications of freeway siting quantitatively and qualitatively but also offer a roadmap to Caltrans and other policymakers for redressing past harms and avoiding future ones when delivering transportation investments.

## WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

The project team continued conducting archival and quantitative research, including defining case study area boundaries in Fresno and Colton, digitizing census records, searching newspaper archives, and interviewing local historians in Colton. Findings so far include primary sources from the formative stages of each highway segment, as well as initial statistical analysis of demographic information in the selected areas.

## IMAGE



Image 1: Image of Colton, CA