

Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 ~~Widening and~~ Route Adoption

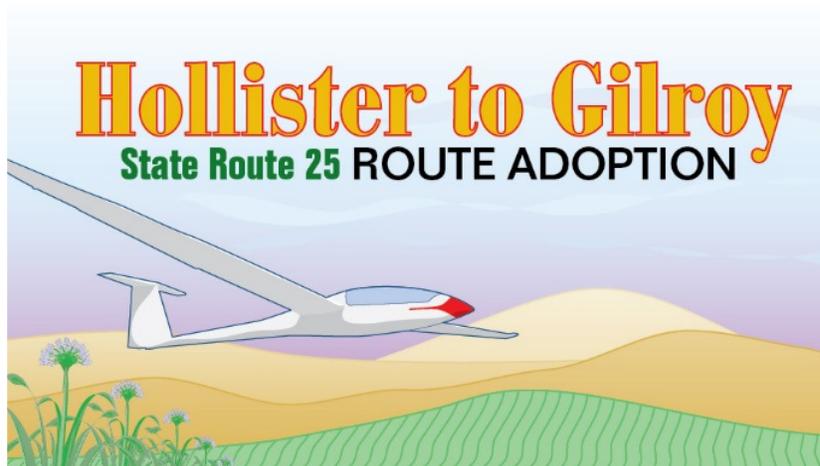
San Benito and Santa Clara Counties, California
05-SBt-25 (PM 51.5/60.1), 04-SCI-25 (PM 0.0/2.6)

05-485400

Project ID 05-0000-0565

Final Environmental Impact Report

Volume II of II



State of California Department of Transportation

June 2016





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Appendix S Public Comments and Responses

Introduction to Response to Comments

This document is a California Environmental Quality Act Final Environmental Impact Report only; it is not a federal document. As a courtesy, responses to comments made under both the federal and state environmental processes are included even though this is no longer a federal document.

The project plans a route adoption for a four-lane expressway only; there is no longer a construction component to the proposed project. As a courtesy, responses to questions about the former construction portion of the project are included based on the hypothetical construction of Alternative B, which was modified in response to comments. If and when there is an actual construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Two comment letters were received from federal agencies.

Federal Agencies

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Pacific Southwest Region, page 1 of 2



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Pacific Southwest Region
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 520
Oakland, California 94607

IN REPLY REFER TO:
ER 10/374

Electronically Filed

2 June 2010

G. William Trais Norris, III
Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Analysis Branch
Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite A-100
Fresno, CA 93726-5428

Subject: Review of Draft Environmental Impact Report and *Tier 1* Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption, San Benito and Santa Clara Counties, California

Dear Mr. Norris:

The Department of the Interior has received and reviewed the subject document and has the following comments to offer. Kindly disregard earlier "no comment" letter sent May 28, 2010.

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act

In Appendix C, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) states that "[t]his section of the document discusses parks, recreational facilities, wildlife refuges, and historic properties found within or next to the project area that do not trigger Section 4(f) protection either because: 1) they are not publicly owned, 2) they are not open to the public, 3) they are not eligible historic properties, 4) the project does not permanently use the property and does not hinder the preservation of the property, or 5) the proximity impacts do not result in constructive use."

However, very little discussion follows that provides evidence to support this statement. Based on the above statement, it does appear there are resources in project vicinity that Caltrans assessed. If this is the case, Caltrans should list potential resources it assessed and describe in more detail specific reason(s) why Section 4(f) in final EIS does not protect each resource.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Pacific Southwest Region, page 2 of 2

A map showing recreational and historic sites in the project vicinity would be especially helpful.

Only passing mention is made of Bloomfield Ranch Headquarters, the one resource found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; there is no analysis supporting Caltrans' position that site will not be "used" under Section 4(f).

In fact, there is not a specific conclusion about Bloomfield Ranch; rather, 4(f) determination for this resource is presumably subsumed in general 4(f) conclusion by Caltrans "that the proposed project avoids all 4(f) properties identified within or next to the proposed project, does not permanently use or hinder the preservation of any 4(f) property, and does not have any proximity impacts that would result in constructive use. Therefore, the provisions of Section 4(f) are not triggered."

Without more information, the Department cannot agree with Caltrans' statement and position that Section 4(f) is not triggered and does not apply.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sanderson Port
Regional Environmental Officer

cc:
Director, OEPC
NPS - WASO

Response to U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Compliance, Pacific Southwest Region

Thank you for your comment on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Only historic properties were evaluated relative to the requirements of Section 4(f) because there are no parks, recreational facilities, or wildlife refuges within or near the project area. A map of historic properties was not included in the environmental document due to the sensitive nature of cultural resources. The location of archaeological sites is confidential, and is not made available to the public.

Two historic properties determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are within the Area of Potential Effects for cultural resources, and also fall within the smaller project area of the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption evaluated in the draft environmental document. Neither of these sites is within or next to the proposed build alternatives, but they are next to the route adoption alternatives.

The Bloomfield Ranch Headquarters sits near the southeast corner of U.S. 101 and State Route 25 and includes a parcel west of U.S. 101. This property, CA-SCL-697/H, is significant as the business headquarters of the Miller & Lux Company cattle ranching empire, as the home of Henry Miller, and for its historic architecture. No right-of-way would need to be acquired from the Bloomfield Ranch property.

CA-SBT-243 is a prehistoric archaeological site assumed eligible for the National Register for the purposes of this project only. Site CA-SBT-243 is next to Alternative 1 and would be protected by an Environmental Sensitive Area if that alternative were selected and, in the future, an interchange were constructed at State Route 156/State Route 25. However, Alternative 1 was not selected as the preferred alternative.

The route adoption alternatives would not use the above properties and would not hinder their preservation. Caltrans made a finding of No Adverse Effect with Standard Conditions under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for cultural resources for this project. Constructive use of either site due to proximity impacts would not occur.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 1 of 6



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

June 10, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III
Senior Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed State Route 25
Hollister to Gilroy Widening and Route Adoption Project, Santa Clara and San
Benito Counties, California (CEQ#20100146)

Dear Mr. Norris:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the document referenced above. Our comments are provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. EPA previously provided scoping comments on the proposed project on May 2, 2008.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as NEPA lead agency, in cooperation with the Council of San Benito County Governments and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, is proposing the eventual replacement of 11.2 miles of the existing State Route 25 (SR-25) two-lane highway with a four-lane expressway in San Benito and Santa Clara counties. The DEIS evaluates two proposed projects: (1) a "project-level" construction project within the limits of a proposed route adoption and (2) a "programmatic-level" proposed route adoption.

Construction Project

The proposed construction project limits extend 3.8 miles in San Benito County, from San Felipe Road in Hollister to just west of Hudner Lane (post miles 51.5 to 55.3). A four-lane expressway would replace the existing two-lane conventional highway. Alternative A would be constructed at the southeastern end of the Alternative 1 route adoption alignment while Alternative B would be built at the southwestern end of the Alternative 2 route adoption alignment. Both construction alternatives would transition back to the existing two-lane highway just west of Hudner Lane.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 2 of 6

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EPA rates the proposed construction project as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed *Summary of EPA Rating Definitions*). The DIES identifies that implementation of either alternative, combined with proper mitigation, should not result in significant environmental impacts. Information provided in the DEIS indicates that the build alternatives will not permanently impact any waters of the U.S., including wetlands, lakes or jurisdictional ephemeral streams. As such, EPA does not anticipate any impact to water quality as a result of project implementation. In addition, while the document identifies that there will be no adverse air quality impacts, EPA supports the implementation of stringent dust control and construction equipment emission control measures during construction in order to reduce temporary impacts to air quality. As the build alternatives are located in a state Particulate Matter 10 non-attainment area, it is important that dust from heavy equipment and off-road work be reduced to the greatest extent possible.

Of the two build alternatives, Alternative B appears to have the fewest adverse environmental impacts. As indicated in the DEIS, Alternative B avoids all potential permanent and temporary impacts to water of the U.S., endangered species, mineral resources, and requires less change to the local traffic circulation patterns. Furthermore, Alternative B requires fewer residential and business relocations, and avoids more potential hazardous waste sites. EPA is concerned that Alternative A has the potential to impact habitat for the federally and state listed threatened California tiger salamander. Not only would the alternative cause temporary impacts to salamander breeding habitat and permanent impacts to upland habitat, but it would also segment the remaining upland habitat, creating a large barrier between breeding and upland areas. Impacts to this species is highly likely if Alternative A were to be built given that five adult salamanders were found in Alternative A's biological study area during field surveys.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

2

EPA is concerned that no provisions for bicyclists or pedestrians have been included in the proposed build alternatives. In light of the recently released DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/policy_accom.htm) and the Complete Streets Act of 2008 in California (http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1351-1400/ab_1358_bill_20080930_chaptered.pdf), bicyclists and pedestrians should be an integral element of transportation project design and should be given the same priority as other modes of transportation.

Recommendations:

- The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) should include additional design elements that provide bicycle and pedestrian access along SR-25, either within the highway right-of-way, or along adjacent frontage roads.

Invasive Species

3

Vegetated areas along SR-25 are already heavily invaded by the alien species that flourish in the region, and thus construction of a newly aligned SR-25 is not likely to play a large role in the introduction of new invaders. However, many of the invasive species found in the project area (e.g. *Centaurea solstitialis*) tend to thrive on the disturbance created by earth-moving activities such as creation of new roads.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 3 of 6

Recommendations:

- The FEIS should address the feasibility of implementing active restoration with native species for all graded areas and cut/ fill slopes that result from project construction.

Route Adoption

The route adoption “programmatic” study extends from San Felipe Road within the City of Hollister (post mile 51.5) to the San Benito/Santa Clara County line (post mile 60.1) and on to the end of SR-25 at U.S. 101, south of the City of Gilroy (post miles 0.0 to 2.6 in Santa Clara County). Both of the route adoption alternatives—Alternatives 1 and 2—are 11.2 miles long and share the same alignment from ½ mile south of Shore Road in San Benito County to U.S. 101 in Santa Clara County. The purpose of the route adoption is to select a corridor that will accommodate existing and future travel demand. Aside from the build alternatives discussed above, no construction is currently proposed as part of the route adoption. EPA rates the route adoption alternatives as *Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information (EC-2)* (see enclosed *Summary of EPA Rating Definitions*). The basis for EPA’s concerns and recommendations for additional information needed are provided below. EPA understands that no construction is proposed at this time and should future construction be proposed, additional environmental review and NEPA documentation would be required.

Aquatic Resources

Information provided in the DEIS indicates that both alternatives will impact sensitive riparian habitat along Carnadero Creek and the Pajaro River, as well as waters of the U.S., including wetlands and other jurisdictional streams.

Recommendations:

- The project level NEPA documents that will tier off of the route adoption document should provide an updated Jurisdictional Delineation with additional information on impacts to these scarce resources, as well as detailed avoidance and mitigation strategies.
- As these riparian zones are the last remaining wildlife corridors in the project area, it is important that the future project-level NEPA documents describe in detail how temporary and permanent impacts to these areas will be minimized throughout construction and operation of SR-25.
- Since selection of one of the build alternatives will limit the range of alternatives that can be analyzed for route adoption, the Record of Decision for this programmatic route adoption document should include a commitment to analyze multiple alignments within the route adoption corridor during project-level environmental review. This is particularly important if any portion of the ultimate project build-out will require a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit, which would necessitate that the

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 4 of 6

least environmentally damaging practicable alternative be selected as the only alignment that can be permitted.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

As stated above for the build alternatives, EPA is concerned that no provisions for bicyclists or pedestrians have been included in the proposed route adoption alternatives. The DOT Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/policy_accom.htm) and the Complete Streets Act of 2008 (http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1351-1400/ab_1358_bill_20080930_chaptered.pdf) state that bicyclists and pedestrians should be an integral element of transportation project design. Bicyclists traveling between Hollister and Gilroy, whether for work or pleasure, should be given the same priority as motorists.

6

Recommendations:

- The FEIS should include additional design elements that provide bicycle and pedestrian access along SR 25, either within the highway right-of-way, or along adjacent frontage roads.

Growth-Related Indirect Impacts

EPA provided scoping comments on the proposed project on May 2, 2008 in which we stated our concerns related to the potential indirect impacts of this project and its provision of improved access to undeveloped areas. The DEIS concludes that the project will not be growth inducing, and states that growth may occur in the area with or without the proposed improvements to SR-25. However, in a press release announcing the decision to withdraw their existing application for the proposed 6800-unit El Rancho San Benito project (<http://www.elranchosanbenito.com>), DMB associates cited the lack of funding for state and county transportation improvements (e.g. widening of State Route 25 and Highway 101) as one of the major reasons their project could not move forward. This statement seems to provide a direct linkage between proposed highway projects and suburban growth in the area, and suggests that the SR-25 project may indeed have the potential to affect the timing and location of growth in the area.

7

Recommendations:

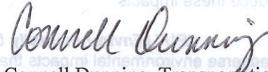
- The Final EIS, and subsequent project-level NEPA documents for the route adoption, should include a more robust analysis of area growth and its relation to the proposed SR-25 expansion. A growth-related impact analysis assists with compliance requirements of NEPA by considering additional environmental consequences of project implementation and providing a well-documented and sound basis for public involvement and government decision-making. As noted in our scoping comments, EPA recommends use of the May 2006 *Guidance for Preparers of Growth-related Indirect Impact Analyses* (Guidance) [http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/Growth-related_IndirectImpactAnalysis/gri_guidance.htm] developed jointly by Caltrans, FHWA, and EPA, as a tool for developing a robust growth-related impact analysis.
- Identify if the project will affect the location and/or timing of planned growth in the area. Specifically, the analysis should identify the potential resources that may be

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 5 of 6

- affected by the increased “zone of influence” associated with interchanges and impacting resources outside of the right-of-way.
- Identify the types of resources that are likely to occur in geographic areas that may be affected by growth. If it is determined that there will be no, or insignificant, impacts to resources of concern, then document the analysis process and report the results. EPA recommends following the Step-by-Step Approach for Conducting the Analysis in Chapter 6 of the Guidance.
 - Include a discussion of mitigation strategies to reduce impacts if adverse impacts cannot be avoided or minimized. Section 6.3 of the Guidance provides an approach to address mitigation for growth-related impacts.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released, please send one hard copy to the address above (Mail Code CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me (415-947-4161) or Clifton Meek, the lead reviewer for this project. Clifton can be reached at 415-972-3370 or meek.clifton@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

Enclosed: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions

CC: Jane Hicks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
David Pereksta, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Laura Peterson-Diaz, California Department of Fish & Game
Cindy Adams, California Department of Transportation

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX, page 6 of 6

SUMMARY OF EPA RATING DEFINITIONS*

This rating system was developed as a means to summarize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) level of concern with a proposed action. The ratings are a combination of alphabetical categories for evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposal and numerical categories for evaluation of the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION

"LO" (Lack of Objections)

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

"EC" (Environmental Concerns)

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EO" (Environmental Objections)

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EU" (Environmentally Unsatisfactory)

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

ADEQUACY OF THE IMPACT STATEMENT

Category "1" (Adequate)

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the review may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category "2" (Insufficient Information)

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category "3" (Inadequate)

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From EPA Manual 1640, Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment.

Response to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region IX

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Thank you for giving the proposed construction project, Alternatives A and B, your Lack of Objections rating. We note your agreement with Caltrans that Alternative B appears to have the fewest adverse environmental impacts.

Response to Comment #2: Bicycle access would be available as the project is currently designed. Bicyclists would have the option to ride on the frontage roads, which would have light traffic, or to use the 10-foot-wide striped shoulder on the expressway. According to the San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan (December 2009), a Class III bicycle route is recommended for State Route 25 in the City of Hollister, from San Felipe Road to Wright Road, and in the county from Wright Road to the Santa Clara County line. A Class III route designation does not require a separate striped lane for bicycles. These projects were ranked 33rd of 34 projects in the second tier of priority ranking of bicycle projects.

Response to Comment #3: Existing plant communities within the build alternatives are agricultural fields, annual grasslands (mostly non-native grasses) and vernal pools. Bare soil resulting from construction would be sown or planted with vegetation suited to the site conditions—soil type, plant community, and availability of water—and compatibility with adjacent farming operations. A combination of annual and perennial flowering plants and grasses, including native species, would be used; weedy plants that could spread to adjacent farm fields would be avoided.

Response to Comment #4: Subsequent Tier II environmental documents for projects within a selected route adoption alignment would include detailed studies, analysis, and specific mitigation measures for impacts to jurisdictional waters and wetlands and riparian habitats. A new wetlands delineation would be prepared as part of this process.

Response to Comment #5: Both route adoption alternatives, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, share the same alignment within the Soap Lake floodplain and in the

areas with vernal pools. This common alignment is the result of analysis and preliminary design performed in the past to reduce impacts for the earlier build alternatives that extended through the route adoption area and beyond.

Response to Comment #6: Bicyclists would have the option to ride on the frontage roads, which would have light traffic, or use the 10-foot-wide striped shoulder on the expressway. It is unlikely that anyone would commute to work or school between Hollister and Gilroy via bicycle because they are 12 miles apart. According to the San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan (December 2009), a Class III bicycle route is recommended for State Route 25 in the City of Hollister, from San Felipe Road to Wright Road, and in the county from Wright Road to the Santa Clara County line. A Class III route designation does not require a separate striped lane for bicycles. These projects were ranked 33rd of 34 projects in the second tier of priority ranking. The Santa Clara Countywide Bicycle Plan (2008) indicates that the proposed Valley Fair to Santa Teresa Cross County Bicycle Corridor would eventually extend southeast along the planned extension of Santa Teresa Boulevard to U.S. 101 and continue on State Route 25 to the San Benito County line. The San Benito County Bicycle Master Plan also proposes a Class I multi-use recreational trail that would run next to the Union Pacific Railroad Hollister line tracks, within the railroad's right-of-way, from Third Street in the City of Hollister to the Santa Clara County line (ranked 28th of 34 projects in the second tier of priority ranking). The San Benito County trail would connect with a planned bicycle corridor along the railroad tracks northwards in Santa Clara County. Other Santa Clara County Cross County Bicycle Corridors in the route adoption area would be the Uvas Creek Trail, extending northwestwards from Bloomfield Road along Uvas (Carnadero) Creek, and a portion of the State Route 152 Bicycle Corridor shown connecting the existing State Routes 152 and 25.

Response to Comment #7: The preliminary growth analysis performed for this project was the “first-cut screening” step of our Caltrans guidance document, Guidance for Preparers of Growth-related Indirect Impact Analyses. The result of the analysis was that a full-blown growth analysis is not warranted. The results were documented in our files. Additional text has been added to Section 3.1.2 Growth.

State Agencies

State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit, page 1 of 1



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE of PLANNING AND RESEARCH
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT



CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

June 10, 2010

G. Williams "Trais" Norris, III
California Department of Transportation, District 6
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726-5428

Subject: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption
SCH#: 2007072114

Dear G. Williams "Trais" Norris, III:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on June 9, 2010, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Acting Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, California 95812-3044
(916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

Response to State Clearinghouse

No response necessary.

California Department of Fish and Game, page 1 of 1



"Laura Peterson-Diaz"
<LPDIAZ@dfg.ca.gov>
05/12/2010 01:43 PM

To "Trais Norris" <trais_norris@dot.ca.gov>
cc "Annee Ferranti" <AFERRANTI@dfg.ca.gov>, "Melissa Escaron" <MESCARON@dfg.ca.gov>, "Zach Parker" <zachary_parker@dot.ca.gov>
bcc

Subject SR 25 Widening and Rt Adoption from Hollister to Gilroy

History: This message has been forwarded.

Hi Trais,
I have reviewed the Draft EIR for the SR 25 Widening and Rt Adoption from Hollister to Gilroy.

There are two Build Alternatives to Widen SR 25. The proposed work is entirely within San Benito County and is therefore within DFG Region 4. If Alternative A is selected, Caltrans will need to consult with Region 4 regarding a State take permit for CTS. If Alternative B is selected there will be no potential impacts to CTS and therefore no need for a take permit. Since Caltrans can avoid impacts by choosing Alt B, I would recommend selecting Alt B.

There are also two Route Adoption Alternatives. Both of these cross over from San Benito County (R-4) to Santa Clara County which is part of DFG Region 3. Both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 would have impacts to Carnadero Creek in Santa Clara Co. and to the Pajaro River which is located on the county line between San Benito Co. and Santa Clara Co. I have spoken with Melissa Escaron who is the Caltrans Liaison for DFG Reg 3. I asked her since Reg 3 will have to do a 1602 SAA for Carnadero Creek, if she would be willing to include Pajaro River as well. Melissa agreed that this was a sensible approach and suggested that I e-mail you to let you know that when the time comes you should submit the 1602 notification for both Carnadero Creek and the Pajaro River to Reg 3.

Thank you for submitting the Draft EIR for Review. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please feel free to contact me.
Sincerely, LPD

Laura Peterson-Diaz
Environmental Scientist - Caltrans Liaison
DFG/Central Region
1234 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno, CA 93710
Voice: (559) 243-4017 ext. 225
lpdiaz@dfg.ca.gov
The hill isn't in the way; it is the way.
- Bicycling November 2009

1

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Response to California Department of Fish and Game (now called the California Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Thank you for your statement. Alternative B, with a reduced footprint, has been selected as the preferred alternative.

Response to Comment #2: Thank you for contacting the Department of Fish and Game Region 3 and establishing that they will handle the 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreements that will be required in the future when the Pajaro River and Carnadero Creek are crossed and bridges are constructed.

Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, page 1 of 1



Sandy
Hesnard/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov
05/11/2010 02:49 PM

To Trais Norris/D06/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT

cc

bcc

Subject SCH# 2007072114- SR 25 Widening and Route Adoption

History: This message has been forwarded.

Trais-

The Caltrans Division of Aeronautics (Division) reviewed the DEIR for SR 25 widening and route adoption. The Division has technical expertise in the areas of airport operations safety, noise and airport land use compatibility. We are also a funding agency for airport projects and we have permit authority for public-use and special-use airports and heliports.

As discussed in the DEIR, a portion of the project site is located just west of the Hollister Municipal Airport. This airport operates with a State Public-Use Airport Permit issued by the Division.

California Public Utilities Code Section 21659 prohibits structural hazards near airports. Depending on structural height, including signs and construction equipment, and in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 77 "Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace" a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460-1) may be required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Form 7460-1 is available on-line at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp> and if required should be submitted electronically to the FAA.

In addition, the Highway Design Manual, Topic 207 - Airway-Highway Clearances, provides guidance for objects such as overhead signs, light standards, construction equipment, moving vehicles and other structural issues associated with highway and over-crossing structures.

The location and type of landscaping trees, and their mature height, is also a potentially significant concern. Trees should be selected carefully so they do not become a hazard to aircraft around the airport.

Sandy Hesnard
Aviation Environmental Specialist
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
Division of Aeronautics (MS 40)
PO Box 942874
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

(916) 654-5314 fax (916) 653-9531
Email: sandy.hesnard@dot.ca.gov
Website: www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics

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Response to Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Alternative B, which is not near the airport, has been selected as the preferred build alternative. If Alternative A had been selected for construction, Caltrans engineers would follow the Highway Design Manual guidance regarding Airway-Highway Clearances during the final design phase. If needed, Caltrans would submit a Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration (Form 7460-1) to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Response to Comment #2: No landscape trees are proposed for the project in the vicinity of the Hollister Municipal Airport.

Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource
Protection, page 1 of 4

NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, GOVERNOR



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

DIVISION OF LAND RESOURCE PROTECTION

801 K STREET • MS 18-01 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 324-0850 • FAX 916 / 327-3430 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEBSITE conservation.ca.gov

September 2, 2010

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III, Senior Environmental Planner
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Office, Unit 189
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Dear Mr. Norris III:

SUBJECT: State Route 25 (SR 25) Widening and Route Adoption-- Draft Tier 1
Environmental Impact Report, San Benito and Santa Clara Counties,
SCH 2010041087

The Department of Conservation's (Department) Division of Land Resource Protection (Division) has reviewed the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the referenced project. The Division monitors farmland conversion on a statewide basis and administers the California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act and other agricultural land conservation programs. We offer the following comments with respect to the project's potential impacts on agricultural land and resources.

Project Location and Description

State Route 25 (SR 25) is a two-lane conventional highway officially designated as a south to north route, runs northwest through the relatively flat terrain of the Hollister Valley, ending at U.S. 101 after crossing the Pajaro River and Carnadero Creek. In San Benito County, SR 25 is also known as Bolsa Road from San Felipe Road to the San Benito-Santa Clara County line. The highway is named Hollister Road in Santa Clara County from the county line to Bloomfield Avenue intersection and it is named Bloomfield Road from that intersection to U.S. 101.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in cooperation with the Council of San Benito County Governments and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority is proposing the eventual replacement of 11.2 miles of the existing State Route two-lane highway with a four-lane expressway in San Benito and Santa Clara counties. A future interchange at SR 25/State Route 156 (SR 156) would require widening SR 156 between post miles R10.5 and R12.2.

The Department of Conservation's mission is to balance today's needs with tomorrow's challenges and foster intelligent, sustainable, and efficient use of California's energy, land, and mineral resources.

Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource
Protection, page 2 of 4

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III, Senior Environmental Planner
September 2, 2010
Page 2 of 4

Route Adoption

The project encompasses two proposed projects: (1) a route adoption for an 11.2-mile four-lane expressway, and (2) construction of a proposed 3.8-mile four-lane expressway project within the limits of the proposed route adoption. The purpose of the proposed route adoption is to: Select a corridor for SR 25 between Hollister and Gilroy that will accommodate existing and future travel demand and facilitate local regional land use planning by identifying future right-of-way needed for the SR 25 corridor. The project summarizes Route Alternatives, 1 and 2; and Build Alternatives, A and B (discussed below):

Route Alternative "1" is a Four-lane expressway planned from the City of Hollister to the Santa Clara County line. At the Santa Clara County line the project will become a planned Six-lane freeway from U.S. 101 to Bolsa Road. The DEIR stipulates that urban growth cannot be seen as a reasonably foreseeable result of the project, but the project will have impacts on 657 acres of farmland, of which 408 acres is considered Prime/Unique and of statewide importance. About 121 acres is restricted by Williamson Act contracts and will be converted from agricultural use if this alternative is adopted.

Route Alternative "2" is also a Four-lane planned expressway that will stretch from Hollister to the Santa Clara County line and change into a Six-lane planned freeway from U. S. 101 to Bolsa Road. This alternative route is also growth inducing as planned, and will convert to non-agricultural uses approximately 660 acres of farmland, of which 411 acres are categorized as Prime/Unique and of statewide importance, and 159 acres is land restricted by Williamson Act contracts.

Build Alternative "A" is a Four-lane expressway planned from Hollister to the Santa Clara County line. This portion of the project is not within Santa Clara County, and includes 180 acres of agricultural described as Prime/Unique with 13.3 acres restricted by Williamson Act contracts. This build alternative also stipulates that growth is not reasonably foreseeable as a result of this project.

Build Alternative "B" is a Four-lane expressway planned from Hollister to the Santa Clara County line. This portion of the project is not within Santa Clara County, but involves 189 acres of Prime/Unique farmland, 51.1 acres of which is encumbered by Williamson Act contracts. The document also describes this option as not conducive to growth resulting from the project.

All of the above options appear to have significant impacts on agricultural resources and will result in the conversion of agricultural land from prime, unique, and farmland of statewide importance to non-agricultural uses. The No-Action or "No Build" Alternative will not have a negative cumulative effect as neither an expressway nor a freeway would be built.

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Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, page 3 of 4

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III, Senior Environmental Planner
September 2, 2010
Page 3 of 4

Mitigation Measures

The loss of 100 or more acres of agricultural land in an agricultural preserve is considered to be a significant impact on agricultural resources under CEQA, and represents a permanent reduction in the State's agricultural land resources.

The route as proposed and the build alternatives would result in significant agricultural impacts. The Department suggests that Caltrans include a discussion in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) of the significant impacts due to the conversion of agricultural land and the cumulative loss of farmland. Some measures for consideration could include:

- 1) funding and purchase of an agricultural conservation easement;
 - 2) purchase of credits from an established farmland mitigation bank;
 - 3) contribution of land or funding to an organization that provides for the preservation of farmland in California;
 - 4) completion of a new Williamson Act or Farmland Security Zone contract;
 - 5) participation in any agricultural land mitigation program adopted by a local jurisdiction that provides equal or more effective mitigation than those listed above.
- Qualifying land can be within the local jurisdiction or outside the local jurisdiction for the same equivalent crops.

Because of its importance to the State, the Department recommends using a ratio of 2:1 for the loss of prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance, as defined by the Department.

The Department encourages the use of permanent agricultural conservation easements as mitigation for agricultural land conversion. We recommend that the quality of mitigation farmland be equivalent to that of the land converted (e.g., prime for prime). The Department also has available a listing of approximately 30 "conservation tools that have been used to conserve or mitigate project impacts on agricultural land. This compilation report may be requested from the Division at (916) 324-0850, or by writing to the Division of Land Resource Protection at the address indicated below.

Department of Conservation
Division of Land Resource Protection
801 K Street, Sacramento CA 95814

Williamson Act Lands

Since lands under Williamson Act contract exist in and around the project area, the Department recommends that the Final EIR/EIS also address the potential impacts of the project on adjacent contracted parcels. The Notification Provisions of the Williamson Act (Government Code section 51291) require public agencies to notify the Director of the Department when a public agency is considering the possibility of an acquisition of

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Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource
Protection, page 4 of 4

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III, Senior Environmental Planner
September 2, 2010
Page 4 of 4

Williamson Act contracted land for a public improvement. This notice is required when the public agency first considers purchasing land enrolled in a Williamson Act contract for a public use. A copy of the notification provisions is enclosed for your reference. This notice is separate from any notices required under CEQA.

Additional Notification Requirements

The Department, Santa Benito and Santa Clara Counties must be advised of any proposed, significant changes to the project in accordance with section 51291(d) of the Government Code. The Department must also be notified within ten (10) days if properties restricted by Williamson Act contracts are actually acquired. If after purchase RCTC and Caltrans determine not to locate the proposed project on the contracted properties, they must notify the Department and Santa Benito and Santa Clara Counties before returning the lands to private ownership. If the project is not constructed on the acquired contracted properties, they must be reenrolled in new contracts or encumbered by enforceable restrictions at least as restrictive as those provided by the Williamson Act (Government Code section 51295) and the previous contracts.

If you have any questions on these comments, please contact Jacquelyn Ramsey, Environmental Planner, at (916) 323-2379.

Sincerely,



Dan Otis
Program Manager
Williamson Act Program

Enclosure

cc: San Benito County Board of Supervisors
San Benito County Farm Bureau
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Farm Bureau

Response to Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection

We are responding to your comments even though your comment letter was sent almost three months after the comment period ended.

This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: This project plans a route adoption for a four-lane expressway only; there is no freeway component.

Response to Comment #2: Alternative 2 has been selected as the preferred route adoption alternative, with design modifications that would reduce the amount of right-of-way acquisition (and therefore farmland) eventually needed for the project. The total farmland acreage that would be needed has been reduced from 660 acres to 497 acres. Of this total, 204.2 acres are currently classified as prime and unique farmland, a savings of approximately 207 acres of the best farmland than what would have occurred with the previously proposed Alternative 2.

Acreage that would be required from parcels under Williamson Act contracts for Alternative 2 has been reduced from 159.1 acres to 129.4 acres total. This alternative may acquire approximately 74.2 acres from three Williamson Act parcels in San Benito County (an increase of 23.1 acres from the previous design), due to moving the new alignment closer to the existing intersection of State Routes 25 and 156 and the design of the interchange proposed in that location. However, in Santa Clara County, only 55.2 acres from seven property parcels would be converted, which is 52.8 fewer acres of Williamson Act acreage than previously proposed for this alternative. The alternative does not appear to acquire enough farmland from any single parcel to result in the cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts.

Caltrans does not agree that this project would induce growth. Please read Section 3.1.2 Growth.

Response to Comment #3: Alternative B has been selected as the preferred build alternative, with design modifications that will reduce the amount of right-of-way acquisition needed for construction. The total estimated farmland to be converted would be approximately 127 acres, a reduction of 62 acres from the previous design.

Alternative B as modified would acquire approximately 53.3 acres from two property parcels under Williamson Act contracts, 2 more acres than with the previous design. The additional acreage is a result of moving the new alignment closer to the existing intersection of State Routes 25 and 156; this was done to reduce farmland impacts overall. The change to this alignment does not appear to acquire enough farmland from any single parcel to result in the cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts.

Response to Comment #4: Because the entire area between Hollister and Gilroy in the vicinity of State Route 25 is farmland, it is not possible to construct an expressway without causing significant impacts to farmland.

Response to Comment #5: After exploring mitigation options, Caltrans has decided to purchase one or more conservation easements as partial mitigation for the preferred build alternative, the modified Alternative B.

Response to Comment #6: The mitigation acreage ratio used on a nearby project in San Benito County is 1:1. The same ratio would be used for this project.

Response to Comment #7: When a conservation easement is purchased, the quality of the farmland is matched proportionally within the farmland classifications with the farmland that is being mitigated for. Caltrans staff used the “30 conservation tools” paper obtained from your Department.

Response to Comment #8: Text has been added to the Farmland section of this document regarding potential indirect impacts to Williamson Act contracted parcels next to the preferred build alternative.

Local and Regional Agencies

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 1 of 9



MBUAPCD

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District
Serving Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties

24580 Silver Cloud Court
Monterey, CA 93940

PHONE: (831) 647-9411 • FAX: (831) 647-8501

June 10, 2010

Sent Electronically to:

trais_norris@dot.ca.gov

Original Sent by First Class Mail.

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III, Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

SUBJECT: ROUTE 25 WIDENING PROJECT – HOLLISTER TO GILROY
DRAFT EIR AND TIER I DRAFT EIS

Dear Mr. Norris:

The Air District submits the following comments for your consideration:

§3.2.6 Air Quality Regulatory Setting. Page 113.

The air quality aspects of the project should be considered in relation to the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District's (MBUAPCD) 2008 California Environmental Quality Act Air Quality Guidelines. Emissions associated with the construction and operational phases of the project should be estimated and compared to the significance thresholds in the document.

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This document can be accessed at:

http://www.mbuapcd.org/mbuapcd/pdf/mbuapcd/pdf/CEQA_full.pdf

2

Regional Air Quality Conformity. Page 118.

The first sentence indicates that Build Alternatives A and B are in San Benito County, which is subject to air quality conformity because the area is nonattainment for the California 1-hour standard for ozone. Please note that conformity only applies to federal standards and not State standards.

3

Table 3.19 Ambient Air Quality Standards. Page 121.

Please note that the ambient air quality standards have been updated from what is shown in this table. The federal standard for nitrogen dioxide now includes a 1-hour average Primary standard which is 0.100 ppm. A Secondary 1-hour standard for nitrogen dioxide was not added. Additionally, on June 2, 2010 EPA revised the federal sulfur dioxide standard to include a 1-hour primary standard of 75 ppb.

Richard A. Stedman, Air Pollution Control Officer

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 2 of 9

The most current State and federal standards (not including the recent changes to the federal sulfur dioxide standard) can be accessed at:

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/aaqs/aaqs2.pdf>

The latest federal standards can be accessed at:

<http://epa.gov/air/criteria.html>

Table 3.19 Attainment Status. Page 121.

The table indicates an attainment status for the area for EPA's 2008 8-hour ozone standard (0.075 ppm). Please note, the area's attainment status for the federal 8-hour ozone standard actually relates to EPA's 1997 standard, which is 0.08 ppm and not the more recent 2008 standard (0.075 ppm). EPA has yet to establish attainment designations for the 2008 standard. Regarding the State ozone standard, the California Air Resources Board does not make separate designations for the 1 and 8-hour components of the State standard so a single "Nonattainment" designation can be used to indicate the area's status for the State ozone standard.

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Mitigation Measure #1 for GHGs (and Entrained Road Dust). Page 195.

This measure indicates that trees and native plants will be planted to help sequester GHGs. The MBUAPCD supports this approach and encourages landscaping the shoulders and medians of the roadway right of way. In addition to absorbing GHGs, these measures have the co-benefit of reducing entrained road dust which can impact local air quality along busy roadways. Live landscaping reduces entrained road dust caused by cars and trucks traveling at high speeds along the roadway, lowers temperatures and reduces fire prone dry weeds. Consistent with Caltrans, we also encourage the use of drought tolerate native vegetation whenever feasible. These operational phase measures control fugitive dust near the source before it drifts offsite.

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The MBUAPCD suggests that the following measures for mitigating entrained road dust also be considered whenever feasible:

8' minimum shoulder widths.

Medians with 4' minimum wide shoulders.

Plant ground cover to paved edge of roadway to stabilize shoulders and reduce fire hazard from dry weeds.

Pave or use non-toxic surfactants on unpaved shoulders and turnouts.

Plant hedges or shrubs along the Right of Way to reduce offsite migration of "dust devils" caused by large trucks traveling at high speeds.

Enhanced speed limit enforcement.

Plant hedges in medians.

When safe, use curbs to prevent soil from migrating on to highway.

Promptly remove soil deposits after wind or storm events

6

Air Quality Construction Dust Control Measures. Page 247.

This section indicates that contractors will comply with the provisions of Caltrans Standard Specification, Section 7-1.01F "Air Pollution Control" and Section 10 "Dust Control" during construction. The MBUAPCD suggests that the Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Table 8-2 of the MBUAPCD's 2008 CEQA Air Quality Guidelines also be considered for mitigating fugitive dust during construction, when not duplicative of the Caltrans Standard Specification.

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Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 3 of 9

MBUAPCD Comment Table

Please see Attachment B for detailed comments regarding the proposed project and alternatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft EIR.

Sincerely,

Jean Getchell
Supervising Planner
Planning and Air Monitoring Division

Attachments:

- Attachment A, Approaches for Mitigating Entrained Road Dust from Paved Roads
- Attachment B, MBUAPCD Comment Table
- Attachment C, Figure 4. On-Road Vehicle Emissions vs. Speed for Freeways for 2000
- Attachment D, SR 25 Traffic vs. Socioeconomic Growth Forecasts 2005-2035 for SB County

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 4 of 9

ATTACHMENT A

APPROACHES FOR MITIGATING ENTRAINED ROAD DUST FROM PAVED ROADS

Notes for Project Development Team Meeting July 11, 2007, City of Hollister Council Chambers

Application – CALTRANS Hwy 25 Widening Project, Hollister

Objective – Look for potentially low cost modifications to what CALTRANS already plans to do with consideration of the benefits for reducing entrained paved road dust. These could be incorporated into our comments on the project DEIR and could help set the stage for standard BMPs in our area and applied to other related upcoming highway development projects in our area, including Hwy 156 and Hwy 101. This related to operational phase PM10 and does not include construction related BMPs for which we (and CALTRANS) already has a standard list of measures. It should be noted that CALTRANS only has jurisdiction up to the R/W. However, offsite impacts (i.e. PM producing dust devils from large trucks and high speed traffic) can easily extend beyond the R/W.

No.	Potential BMP	Source	Comment
1.	Widen shoulders (8' min)	Obvious	Proposed 8 to 10'
2.	Pave apron access points from unpaved at grade access roads to minimize track-out.	Obvious	CALTRANS says this will be done.
3.	Establish ground cover to paved edge of roadway	Obvious	Review landscape plan
4.	Hedges in center median	Obvious	"
5.	Hedges along R/W	Obvious	"
6.	Wind fence along R/W	Obvious	"
7.	Pave or use surfactants on turnouts	Obvious	Review road cross-section plan
8.	Enhanced speed limit enforcement	Obvious	CHP?
9.	8' min shoulder for ADT > 3,000, curbing requirements, median with shoulders at least 4' wide, curbs on medians, landscaped medians, options to use surfactants in lieu of paving or landscaping	SJV Rule 8061 SoC Rule 1186	Existing hard requirements in other parts of California (SJVUAPCD and SCAQMD)
10.	Compilation of BMPs	Nevada DEP Bureau of Air Pollution Control	Good overall list
11.	Shoulder stabilization, unpaved road paving scheduling, requirements for paving, vegetating or chemically stabilizing unpaved access points unto paved roads, schedule to establish 4' min shoulders or curbs for all collector and arterial streets, road sweeping/vacuuming, prompt cleaning of erosion deposits from wind or storm events	City of Tulare, Public Works Dept	Potential application to frontage roads

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 5 of 9

Attachment A: Page 1 of 3

Notes from 101/San Juan Road Improvement Project Open House on 8/28/07:

1. **APCD Concerns** - Entrained road dust and exhaust emissions, including criteria, diesel exhaust and GHG emissions.
2. **Regional Significance** - Entrained road dust represents about 10% of the NCCAB's entire regional EI for PM10 and is the 3rd largest fugitive dust category. Obviously, the contribution can be much higher for locations close to highways.
3. **Relation to 656 PM10 Plan** - Although a paved road dust measure was not specifically identified in our SB 656 plan, the plan allowed flexibility to consider a wide array of BMPs that reduce PM10 during the environmental review phase of specific projects. While the MBUAPCD will not be adopting a specific rule, the fugitive dust issue should be raised during the CEQA comment period, or preferably during the scoping phase for the EIR.

Measures discussed with the CALTRANS landscape person to whom I was directed:

- Shoulder stabilization.
- Best to control fugitive dust at the source rather than once it is airborne.
- Curbs prevent soil migration onto Hwy
- Establish minimum shoulder widths (typically 8' minimum)
- Landscape plan – having live vegetation up to the edge of the pavement
- Reduce track out by eliminating access from unpaved areas
- Vegetation also improves soil moisture thus binder particles.
- Apply non-toxic surfactants along unpaved shoulders and turnouts
- Fire concern – CALTRANS mentioned that CDF wants the edge of the roadway free of dry weeds, so the weed abatement program may potentially conflict with having vegetation to roadway edge.
- Some Conservation Management Practices advocated by RCD can also serve as fugitive dust BMPs for paved and unpaved road shoulders. These include establishing drought tolerant grasses and hedges along drainages, roadway shoulders (when not a fire hazard) and erodible soil areas.
- Pave unpaved turnouts
- Porous hedges and shrub lines can reduce “dust devils: created by large trucks.
- Fugitive dust includes both inhalable PM₁₀ (health issue) and deposition particles (nuisance issue). Both are a concern of the District.
- Road dust may also include toxic constituents.
- Reference SCAQMD Rule 1186 for regulatory measures adopted by the South Coast.

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 6 of 9

Attachment A: Page 2 of 3

4. Exhaust Emissions along Project Corridor

- **GHG** – Main question is whether or not the project increases or decrease fuel consumption along the project stretch. Landscaping is again beneficial as it can serve as a sink for both GHG as well other exhaust emissions. Effectiveness not known.
- **Diesel** – Similarly, does the project increase or decrease accel/decel cycles along the stretch as well as idle and residence time along the project length of the highway. ARB impact corridor guideline extends out 500' from hi-volume fwys.
- **Accident Backups** – Increase or decrease?
- **Congestion** – Increase or decrease?
- **Latent Demand** – Do non-capacity increasing safety projects trigger latent demand?

Attachment A: Page 3 of 3

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 7 of 9

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Comment Table: Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption DEIR and Tier 1 DEIS

No.	DEIR page	Comment	ref
1	xi	Reduced CO claimed, but increased average speeds cause increases in NOx and CO emissions above 30 MPH. Why did the DEIR not document the NOx, and CO emissions increased by the project effecting an increase in average speed from 35-40 MPH to "free flow" speeds of 65-75 MPH? (See attached graph: Figure 4, On-road vehicle emissions vs. speed for freeways for 2000).	Table S.1, and This Attachment C
2	7	"...the resulting level of service is recorded as LOS E by the model used for two-lane highways." Define the term "the model used", and cite where this model is documented in the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual.	
3	7	In Table 1.1 and elsewhere in the DEIR, existing and forecast traffic are reported as the same, with or without the projects. Explain why this several hundred-million dollar capacity-increasing roadway project was not evaluated using AMBAG's or VTA's travel demand model, which would have more accurately forecast SR 25 traffic with and without the project.	Table 1.1
4	7	Explain why the DEIR forecasts traffic growth on San Felipe Rd. to SR 156 ADT in Table 1.1 almost twice as fast as the highest official AMBAG population, housing unit or employment growth forecasts for San Benito County by 2015. (See attachment D). Similarly, explain why the DEIR forecasts of traffic on SR25 thru 2015 increase per person, per house or per job in the county.	Table 1.1., This Attachment D
5	7, 9	"whenever percent time spent following is measured at 80% or more..." and "...the data for these two criteria [speed and % time following] were plotted on a graph to determine level of service. see Figure 1-3)" Explain why % passing ability on a roadway that "prohibits passing throughout the length of the project" (i.e. is 100% no passing) is useful as a criterion to determine level of service, and why another more appropriate method was not used with a possibly very different result.	Fig. 1-3
6	8	Describe how "average travel speeds" were measured.	
7	8	"During the peak...hours, vehicles travel...cannot pass more than 80% of the time". This is elsewhere stated as prohibited, i.e. 100%.	Fig. 1-3 and see comment # 5
9	9	"Adding another through lane in each direction would allow for safe passing of slower moving vehicles" Given that the average peak hour travel speeds through 2035 shown in Table 1.2 are almost 40 MPH without the project, and given that exhaust emissions of GHG, ROG, NOx and PM10 from motor vehicles per VMT increase above 40-45 MPH, explain why those pollutant emissions will not increase in the project alternatives to allow passing and cause higher average travel speeds than those shown here.	Table 1.2
10	11	"Five Alternatives are under consideration..." Explain why the potentially feasible alternative of instead developing bus transit service on the adjacent, proximate existing rail right of way using a busway and bus rapid transit operation, to avoid or substantially lessen the significant cost and environmental effects of the project, even if that busway alternative would lessen the attainment of the project objectives. A busway alternative in the 100' UPRR ROW is neither remote nor speculative, and should have been considered.	
11	34	"...the route adoption would not open new areas to development or lead to changes in land use because access would be controlled and jurisdictions counties would have to approve future development..." Explain how access control or jurisdictional authority would prevent cumulative growth inducement by the project.	
12	68	"...ramps of the interchange proposed at SR 156". Explain why the DEIR did not propose roundabouts in lieu of traffic signals at new at-grade intersections to be constructed for project alternatives, to reduce the GHG gas project impacts.	
13	70	"If either proposed build alternative is constructed, traffic would be free-flowing, with no delays ". Explain how expressway free flow average speeds (at least 65 MPH in California) compared to no-build speeds, do not increase NOx and CO emissions. (See attached graph: Figure 4, On-road vehicle emissions vs. speed for freeways for 2000)	This Attachment C
14	189	"the commuter rail proposal was not proposed as an alternative..." Understandably. However, explain why a BRT busway transit on the UPRR ROW alternative was not proposed as an alternative.	See comment #10

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 8 of 9

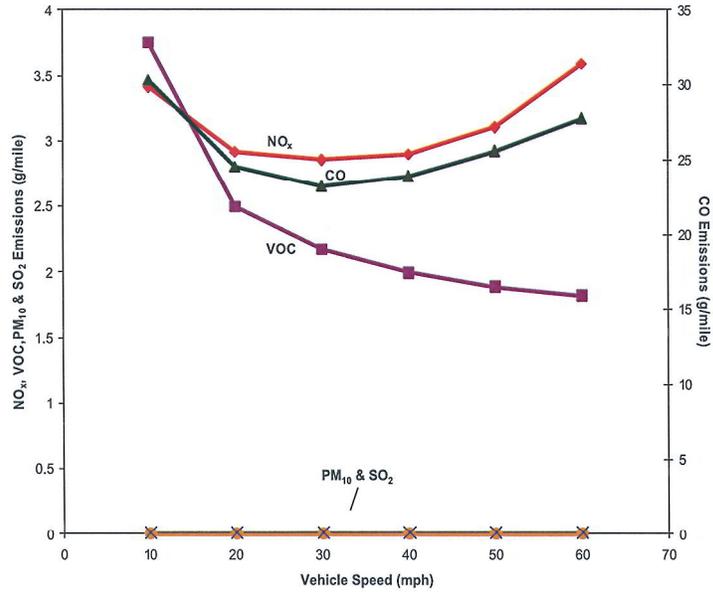
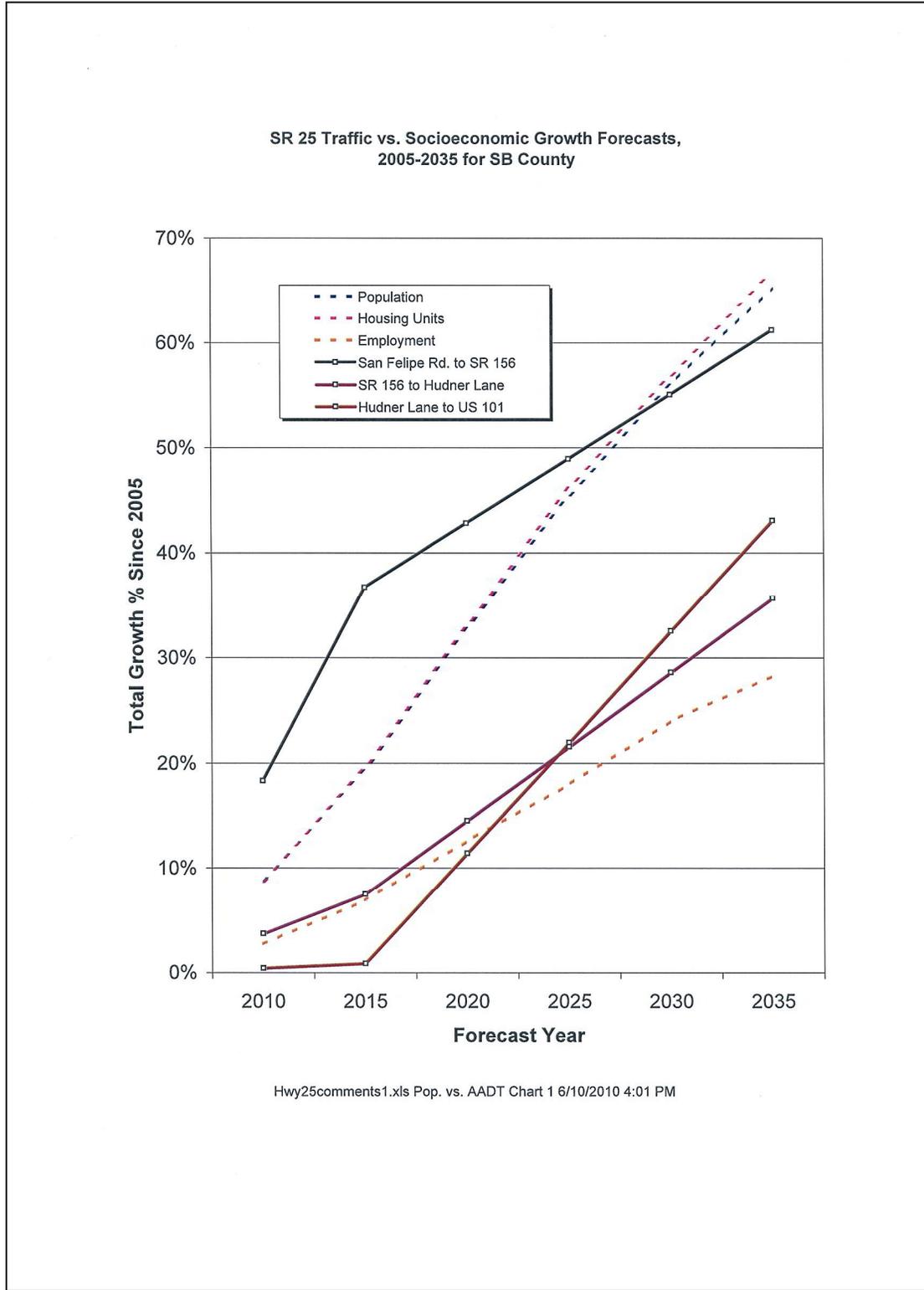


Figure 4. On-Road Vehicle Emissions vs. Speed for Freeways for 2000

Figure 5 shows the emissions contribution by pollutant for the on-road EI. The pie chart shows CO as the dominant on-road pollutant, contributing 83% to the on-road EI. VOCs and NO_x each contribute 8%, and PM₁₀ and SO₂ both contribute less than 1% to the on-road inventory. It is important to note that pollutant emissions are not directly related to ambient pollutant concentrations. The national health standards account for these relationships. The CO 8-hour average health standard is 9 parts per million (ppm) while the ozone 8-hour average health standard is set at a lower threshold of 0.08 ppm. While CO is the largest portion of the on-road EI, it is not a health concern, while ozone generated by VOCs and NO_x is more of an issue for this region. Currently, CO levels are at one-third of the health standard, whereas monitored ozone levels are at 85%.

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, page 9 of 9



Response to Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency for this project, is not required to adhere to the significance thresholds in the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District’s 2008 CEQA Air Quality Guidelines. The guidelines will be taken into consideration, but Caltrans reserves the right to make its own determination of whether or not the construction or operational impacts of a project are significant under CEQA.

Response to Comment #2: As you stated, air quality conformity applies only to federal standards. The text you referred to has been corrected, thank you.

Response to Comment #3: Table 3.19 of Volume I of this document has been revised and updated to show the most up-to-date ambient air quality standards.

Response to Comment #4: Table 3.19 has been changed to reflect your comment that the California Air Resources Board does not distinguish between the 1-hour and 8-hour readings for ozone levels when assigning the attainment designation.

Response to Comment #5: Thank you for your comment regarding the revegetation and landscaping planned as part of the project.

Response to Comment #6: Regarding the suggestions for mitigating entrained road dust:

- The shoulder width of the expressway and the paved frontage roads would be 10 feet.
- The paved shoulder along the median would be 5 feet wide.
- Drought-tolerant native grasses would be planted in the median and would be mowed in the summer for fire safety.
- All shoulders and turnouts would be paved.

- This project is in a rural area. Revegetation for erosion control purposes will be planted. Formal landscaping is not planned except for the Hollister Gateway at the southeast end of the project.
- This project would not have hedges or any barriers in the median.

Caltrans requirements to reduce re-entrained road dust include the following measures:

- Wash off trucks as they leave the right-of-way as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions.
- Use track-out reduction measures such as gravel pads at project access points to minimize dust and mud deposits on roads used by construction traffic.
- Promptly and regularly remove dust and mud that are deposited on paved public roads due to construction activity and traffic to decrease particulate matter.

Response to Comment #7: Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District construction Best Management Practices listed in Table 8-2 of its 2008 Air Quality CEQA guidelines will be followed by the contractor if possible.

Response to Comment #8: The Carbon Monoxide Protocol (US Davis 1997) was used to analyze carbon monoxide (CO). Because the proposed project is located in a carbon monoxide attainment area, further detailed analysis did not appear to be warranted. Regarding nitrogen oxide (NO_x), it has not been Caltrans' practice to analyze this pollutant.

Response to Comment #9: The model used to predict level of service for the existing two-lane highway is discussed in Chapter 12 Highway Concepts (pages 12-11 to 12-19) and in Chapter 20 Two-Lane Highways (pages 20-1 to 20-48) of the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual, published by the Transportation Research Board.

Response to Comment #10: Table 1.1 (repeated as Table 3.11) shows only existing and predicted future traffic without the projects. Table 1.3 (repeated as Table 3.12) similarly shows only existing and predicted level of service without the projects, continuing into the future at level of service E. Table 3.13 displays the predicted levels of service for the route adoption alternatives, showing that acceptable levels of service would be attained if either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 could be constructed all at once. The No-Build Alternative is included in this table for comparison and, as just stated, would continue at level of service E. Table 3.14 shows the existing and predicted levels of service for the build alternatives in the same format as Table 3.13.

As stated in the document, the travel demand forecast model used for the traffic analysis was the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) 2004 model, which was the version available when the Traffic Operations Analysis report was prepared for this project.

Response to Comment #11: It was appropriate for the traffic study to analyze level of service by examining the factors of average speed of a vehicle and traffic delay. Percent-time-spent-following is a measure of traffic delay and hourly traffic volume on a Class I two-lane highway, and is not directly proportional to whether or not passing is allowed on the highway. When slow vehicles cause a line of cars to back up behind them, they can turn left or right out of the stream of traffic where there is at-grade access to the highway such as private driveways and public roads, so percent-time-spent-following does not necessarily reach 100%.

Response to Comment #12: Average travel speeds were calculated by the length of a highway segment divided by the average travel time of all vehicles driving that segment in both directions during a designated period of time, in this case one hour, hence miles per hour. See answer to Comment #11 above.

Response to Comment #13: See response to Comment #11 above.

Response to Comment #14: Vehicle emissions will be cleaner by 2018 and will continue to be cleaner through 2038.

Response to Comment #15: Bus rapid transit involves converting a bus line into an express bus line on an existing roadway, typically with a dedicated lane, and limited stops (only at stations). In California, these bus rapid transit projects have been done in congested urban areas. The Union Pacific Railroad Hollister line is still an active freight line, and the 100-foot-wide right-of-way is owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. Furthermore, there is no paved roadway within or next to the railroad line that could be used for a dedicated busway, as this is a rural area.

Response to Comment #16: The route adoption would not induce growth or cause cumulative growth. It is plausible that the route adoption may be viewed as having the potential to affect the timing and location of growth in the area; however, a route adoption only preserves an area for future needs and any growth could be avoided or minimized based on the goals and objectives adopted in the General Plans of both jurisdictional counties.

Once right-of-way for a Tier II project within an adopted alignment is acquired, fencing would be placed on the new right-of-way lines, limiting access onto the new expressway. For the preferred Route Adoption Alternative 2, access would be eliminated except from the intersections at San Felipe Road, Wright Road, Briggs Road, State Route 156, Shore Road, and Bolsa Road, which would be improved. Intersections would be eliminated at Hudner Lane, Flynn Road, and Bloomfield Road, and a new connector at Grant Line is proposed. All of these intersections currently provide access onto State Route 25 except for the Grant Line Road connector, which was proposed to provide access to the existing private driveways and local roads. The route adoption alternative would eliminate all the existing driveway and local road access onto State Route 25. Also, the use of private access easements instead of frontage roads would reduce vehicular traffic by the general public.

Response to Comment #17: The only traffic signal proposed for the build alternatives would be at the new State Route 156/State Route 25 intersection. With roundabouts (sometimes known as traffic circles), cars and trucks are required to slow down or stop to yield to the vehicles that are already in the circle as they proceed through the intersection. When vehicles have to slow down or stop, they are using gasoline or diesel fuel less efficiently, which causes higher emissions. After passing through the roundabout, vehicles will accelerate up to highway speed again if they are traveling down the highway. Acceleration uses more fuel and creates more emissions than free flow speed. Free flow is the flow of traffic unaffected by traffic conditions up or down the highway.

Roundabouts may not reduce emissions when thousands of vehicles are forced to slow or slow and stop, then accelerate. With two-way stop-control at the side streets, as proposed for this project, the highway traffic can just proceed through the intersection at free flow speed and only the side street traffic (which is much lighter than mainline volumes) is required to stop. For the two-way stop-controlled intersection as a whole, total emissions from vehicles should be lower than total emissions from the roundabout, with a smaller number of vehicles having to slow and stop before entering the highway.

Within the project area, the side street traffic volumes of the at-grade intersections are much lower than the volume of traffic on the highway. Building a roundabout at these intersections would be counter-productive because every vehicle would be forced to slow and/or come to a complete stop, then accelerate back up to free flow speed,

causing more emissions. The delay caused by the roundabout would affect every vehicle that goes through the intersection, creating unnecessary time delays for traffic going down the highway. At a two-way stop-controlled intersection, the number of vehicles having to stop and delay are on the side street only, where the numbers are usually much lower than the mainline.

In addition, ideal locations for roundabouts are intersections with equal numbers of vehicles entering the roundabout from all roads. Within the project area, the two suitable locations for roundabouts would be at the intersection of State Route 156/State Route 25 (for the build alternative only) and at State Route 25/San Felipe Road. Future traffic demand may require 3-lane roundabouts at these locations. The large curves would encourage high speed through the roundabouts and jeopardize the safety of the intersection. An effective roundabout should be able to reduce vehicle speed as vehicles proceed through the intersection.

Response to Comment #18: Caltrans defines free flow of traffic as 55-65 miles per hour. Vehicle emissions will be cleaner by 2018 and will continue to be cleaner through 2038.

Response to Comment #19: See Response to Comment #15 above.

Santa Clara County Water District, Page 1 of 2



5750 ALMADEN EXPWY
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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

File: 28817
Uvas Carnadero Creek
X-Fac: Pajaro River

June 10, 2010

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III
Branch Chief
California Department of Transportation
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Subject: State Route 25 Widening (SBT-25-52.5/55.3) and Route Adoption (SBT-25-51.5 to SCL-25-2.6)

Dear Mr. Norris:

The Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and the Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared for the subject project, received on April 26, 2010. The District has no comment relative to the proposed build project for the widening of Route 25 from San Felipe Road in the City of Hollister to just west of Hudner Lane (post miles 51.5 to 55.3 in San Benito County). The District has the following comments related to the proposed route adoption from San Felipe Road in Hollister to U.S. Highway 101 in Santa Clara County:

1. The District has flood control, water management, and storm water drainage easements over Uvas Carnadero Creek and Pajaro River at the locations of the proposed route adoption. Any structure placed within these easements requires District approval. The District should be consulted early in the design phase for any future construction of the route alignment, including construction of bridges and placement of fill for proposed roads.
2. The document mentions that the route adoption will mitigate for impacts to the floodplain within and adjacent to Uvas Carnadero Creek and the Pajaro River (known as Soap Lake) through the construction of bridges, drainage ditches, and cross culverts to allow floodwaters to pass and follow their historic patterns. However, the document does not mention the specific flood events such as the 2-year, 5-year, 10-year, or 100-year, for which the project will mitigate. From Appendix Q, the proposed route may affect the Pajaro River floodplain during a flood event as frequently as the 2-year and the Soap Lake floodplain, which includes the Uvas Carnadero floodplain, in the flood events between the 2-year and the 100-year event. The District recommends the document specify the specific flood events, for which the proposed route project will provide mitigation.

1

2

The mission of the Santa Clara Valley Water District is a healthy, safe and enhanced quality of living in Santa Clara County through watershed stewardship and comprehensive management of water resources in a practical, cost-effective and environmentally sensitive manner.



Santa Clara County Water District, Page 2 of 2

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III
Page 2
June 10, 2010

3

3. The document does not mention whether the future bridges over Uvas Carnadero Creek and the Pajaro River may likely include piers in the channels. Any pier(s) proposed within the main channels, may impact the level of scour, sedimentation, and flood elevations in creeks. The District recommends that these potential impacts be mentioned if piers are likely and possible mitigations be identified in the future environmental documents

4

4. The California Environmental Quality Act checklist in Appendix A states that there will be no impacts for hydrology and water quality for all areas, except for a less than significant impact for placing structures within a 100-year flood hazard area which would impede or redirect flood flow (Item IX(h)). Depending on how the proposed bridges, drainage ditches, cross culverts, infiltration devices, biofiltration swales and strips are designed, it may be more appropriate to designate items IX(a, c, d, e, f, and h) as Less Than Significant with Mitigation since their significance is dependent on future mitigation measures being implemented.

The District appreciates the opportunity to comment on the DEIR and Tier I DEIS. We would appreciate reviewing future environmental documents for future design and construction of the adopted route alternative when they are available for public comment. If you have any questions, you may contact me at (408) 265-2607, extension 2319.

Sincerely,



Yvonne Arroyo
Associate Engineer
Community Projects Review Unit

cc: S. Tippets, S. Katric, V. Stephens, L. Lee, File

28817_53012ya06-10

Response to Santa Clara County Water District

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Thank you for making comments regarding the route adoption alternatives. Caltrans will contact the Water District when future Tier II environmental documents are initiated so that your agency can have input into the design process.

Response to Comment #2: Tier II environmental documents for future construction that would occur in the floodplain would include more detailed hydrological information and would specify the specific flood events for which the designed bridges, drainage ditches, and cross culverts would mitigate.

Response to Comment #3: The bridges probably would be designed so that no piers would be in the channels of Uvas (Carnadero) Creek or the Pajaro River. If any design requiring piers in the water is considered, the Tier II environmental document would disclose this fact and propose mitigation measures.

Response to Comment #4: Future Tier II environmental documents will present water quality and hydrology issues in detail when each segment is proposed for construction. The area between Hudner Lane and the Pajaro River, for example, would not have the mitigation needs that the Soap Creek floodplain area would have.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, page 1 of 1



June 9, 2010

Caltrans
District 6
2015 E. Shields Avenue
Fresno, CA 93726

Attention: Trais Norris

Subject: State Route 25 Widening

Dear Mr. Norris:

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) staff have reviewed the Draft EIR for widening State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and U.S. 101. We have no comments on the proposed project at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have any questions, please call me at (408) 321-5784.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roy Molseed", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Roy Molseed
Senior Environmental Planner

RM:kh

Response to Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Thank you for your response.

County of San Benito, Board of Supervisors, page 1 of 2



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

481 Fourth Street • Hollister, CA 95023
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sbcsuper@supervisor.co.san-benito.ca.us

June 8, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris III, Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726-5428

Re: Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Mr. Norris:

The County of San Benito would like to provide its comments on the Hollister-to-Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Draft Environmental Impact Report and Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement. There is a concern that the both alternatives are flawed and do not meet the needs of San Benito County for its future growth and development, and the preservation of farmland. We request that the California Department of Transportation review the designs and come up with another alternative that is more economically feasible and reduces impacts to farmland.

1

However, the County believes the superior right-of-way and build alternatives still present a reducibly high level of impact to the project's setting. We also recognize that Alternatives 2 and B consume a greater amount of farmland, including 31 percent more Williamson Act acreage, than Alternatives 1 and A. In its General Plan, the County aims to protect its rural atmosphere, including its soils, and therefore we request that Caltrans consider further project refinement that minimizes the amount of acreage converted to roadway use. Our comments on this issue are the following:

2

- ◆ The County is concerned about the expressway's 342-foot right-of-way width. While the text suggests that a portion of this width will be used by frontage roads, this fact is unclear and may require clarification, such as in Figure 2-3.
- ◆ Assuming the right-of-way width will include frontage roads, Figure 2-1 indicates that the full 342 feet will not be necessary in many locations. The County requests that Caltrans provide greater detail on where the full right-of-way will be used and, furthermore, that the project refrain from using the full 342 feet unless required for safety and for frontage road access.
- ◆ In some locations along the route as depicted in Figure 2-1, the frontage roads appear to separate from the expressway. In these cases the road does not reflect the report's description of a typical right-of-way cross section, which suggests three public road facilities (one expressway and two frontage roads) immediately adjacent to each other. As such, the ownership of lands between the diverging roads is

County of San Benito, Board of Supervisors, page 2 of 2

G. William "Travis" Norris III, California Department of Transportation
Re: Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Draft Environmental Impact Report
June 8, 2010
2

3

uncertain, and so is the future use of these lands. The County is interested in knowing to what degree these spaces will become public right-of-way (and possibly fallow) or will remain privately owned (and potentially worked as farmland). We also would like to know whether spaces like these factored into the report's calculations of lost farmland.

4

◆ Also of concern to the County is the width of the median, which Figure 2-3 indicates will typically be 52 feet. This could be necessary for at-grade interchanges, where vehicles may need this broad space to make safe transitions while entering or exiting the expressway. Elsewhere along the 11.2-mile route, though, the width seems unwarranted.

5

◆ Further detail is requested on the interface between the project alternatives (particularly Alternatives 1 and A) and the Hollister Municipal Airport. The report's text describes a conflict between the road expansion and an airport perimeter road project, but further detail (including a graphic) describing the effect that road construction and operation would have on the airport would be helpful. Refinement of the road's right-of-way details may also assist in illustrating and perhaps reducing the project's impact on the airport.

The County appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project. We would like to stress that the loss of agricultural ground is of primary concern to the County, and we are interested in maintaining the roadway's footprint at a level that is no more than necessary. We insist on a reduced footprint would have a lighter effect on the land, which would result in fewer acres of agricultural land lost, reduced modification to natural drainage, less soil disturbance, less airborne matter resulting from grading activity, potentially reduced impacts to aesthetics, and increased distances between noise sources and receptors. As such, the County strongly urges the alternatives be refined as much as possible in an effort to preserve our natural resources.

Sincerely,



REB MONACO, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: Susan Thompson, CAO
Cathy Woodbury, Interim Director of Planning
Steve Wittry, Director of Public Works

Response to San Benito County, Board of Supervisors

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: This project is sponsored by San Benito County through the Council of San Benito County Governments and is funded by them. County representatives have been on the Project Development Team for this project since its beginning more than 10 years ago. Up until this time, San Benito County had not expressed to Caltrans any concerns about the magnitude of farmland impacts due to the project. We do not agree that the alternatives presented in the draft environmental document were flawed; however, Caltrans decided to modify the project design in response to County and public comments.

Response to Comment #2: The minimum width of the four-lane expressway shown in Figure 2-3, 342 feet, does not include frontage roads, which is why they are not shown there. The reason for this is that the distance between the frontage roads and the expressway would vary because the existing highway would be used for frontage roads where possible and also because frontage roads need to connect to local roads. New frontage roads require at least 56 feet of additional right-of-way to meet Caltrans design standards, as shown in Figure 2-4. The 342-foot-wide expressway was designed to meet Caltrans standards for safety and access control. In response to San Benito County's concerns, the design team for this project applied for and has received design exceptions to modify the design of the preferred alternatives, Alternative 2 and Alternative B, to achieve a minimum expressway width of 240 feet.

Response to Comment #3: Caltrans would not acquire or retain acreage that is not needed for build Alternative B. It is likely that portions or slivers of some farm parcels split by the project would be too small or oddly configured to continue to be farmed. As part of the right-of-way process for purchasing land, Caltrans negotiates parcel exchanges with neighboring farmers to reconfigure split farmland parcels for resale so that the parcels would continue to be farmed.

The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating forms completed for the project take into consideration only parcels or portions of parcels that would need to be acquired for the project, not the areas between the edge of the Caltrans right-of-way and the frontage road right-of-way. These areas would remain in private ownership unless the remainder is unusable, which Caltrans makes efforts to avoid.

Response to Comment #4: A design exception has been approved to allow a median width of 46 feet instead of the standard 62-foot-wide median (median widths include the inside shoulders). The median would taper out to be wider at the unsignalized intersections (86 feet) so that large trucks would have enough room to stop in the middle before making left turns onto the expressway.

Response to Comment #5: Alternative 2 and Alternative B, with design modifications, have been selected as the preferred alternatives. Neither of these alternatives would have any effect on the airport, nor would the airport affect expressway traffic.

City of Hollister, Development Services, page 1 of 3



City of Hollister
Development Services
Planning Division

375 Fifth Street, Hollister, CA 95023 Ph (831) 636-4360 Fax (831) 636-4364

June 7, 2010

Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III
Branch Chief, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
2105 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, California 93726

Subject: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Tier I Environmental Impact Statement for the Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

Thank you for providing a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Tier I Environmental Impact Statement for the Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption to the City of Hollister. The City of Hollister submits the following comments on the Draft report.

1

Comment 1: Section 3.1.1.2 Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans *Affected Environment, first paragraph states that the City of Hollister General Plan Land Use Plan shows an additional interchange at State Route 25 and San Felipe Road. The text should be corrected to state that the City of Hollister General Plan Land Use Plan identifies the intersection of State Route 25 and San Felipe Road as a future signalized intersection not as an interchange. The Land Use Plan indicates that the intersection will be signalized along with other intersections that are now signalized as a result of the recent completion of the Highway 25 bypass. There is no interchange contemplated on the City of Hollister General Plan Land Use Plan or Map 13 Circulation Diagram of the Circulation Element. Please correct the text in the Final EIR.*

2

Comment 2: Section 3.1.1.1, Table 3.1 Proposed and Approved Developments lists El Rancho San Benito as a specific plan application that was withdrawn in May of 2009. The previous paragraph describes the proposal as a proposed project. Please correct the text to be internally consistent.

City of Hollister, Development Services, page 2 of 3

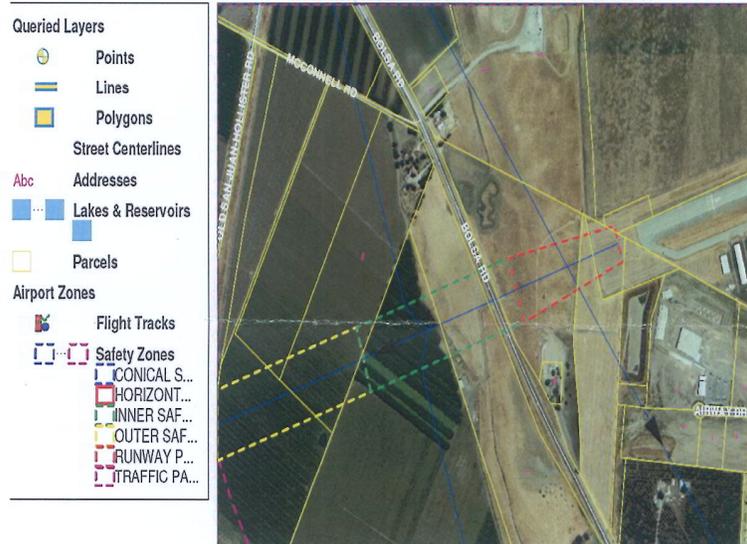
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Comment 3: Transportation/Traffic. The draft EIR explains that Route Adoption Alternative 1 and Build Alternative A could be re-aligned east of State Highway 25 between Briggs Road and Shore Road. Please add a discussion to the Final EIR in relation to the environmental checklist item XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC: c) and add the following information:

4

- Provide a more detailed description and maps to illustrate the proximity of the possible Route Adoption Alternative 1 and Build Alternative A re-alignment of Highway 25 to the western end of the City of Hollister Municipal Airport Runway 6/24 and the Runway Protection Zone in the Hollister Municipal Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan (see map below).
- Evaluate potential safety hazards from the possible Route Adoption Alternative 1 and Build Alternative A to aircraft using Runway 6 and automobiles on State Route 25.
- Describe potential grade changes for the Don Chapin undercrossing that could be required near the end of Runway 6/24 and whether or not the elevations comply with the FAR Part 77 Surfaces for Runway 6/24.

5



The City of Hollister appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft environmental report.

City of Hollister, Development Services, page 3 of 3

Sincerely,



Mayor Victor Gomez
City of Hollister City Council

Cc: Mike Chambless, City of Hollister Airport Manager
San Benito County Council of Governments

Response to City of Hollister, Development Services

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: The correction regarding San Benito County’s future plans for the State Route 25/San Felipe Road intersection has been made by deleting the statement that the General Plan showed this intersection as an interchange.

Response to Comment #2: A sentence has been added to the text explaining that the Specific Plan Application for the El Rancho San Benito development was withdrawn by the developers in May 2009.

Response to Comment #3: The preliminary design for Route Adoption Alternative 1 and build Alternative A would have the alignment 800 feet west of Runway 6/24 and would not be within the Runway Safety Zone. Neither of these alternatives was selected as preferred alternatives.

Response to Comment #4: The preliminary design for Route Adoption Alternative 1 and build Alternative A meet all of the airspace clearances stated in the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77, Obstructions Affecting Navigable Airspace, regarding aircraft using Runway 6 and any proposed improvements for these alternatives.

Response to Comment #5: The profile grade changes for the proposed Don Chapin Undercrossing would not affect any of the airport runways and would comply with the Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77. This structure would be on Alternative A and Alternative 1; however these alternatives are not the preferred alternatives.

Council of San Benito County Governments, page 1 of 2



June 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris III
Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

RE: Hollister to Gilroy State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Draft Environmental Impact Report and Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Norris:

The Council of San Benito County Governments appreciates the opportunity to comment on the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption project. The Council of Governments supports improvements to Highway 25 for safety improvements and congestion relief. The roadway is used for commuting, agricultural operations, tourism, and goods movement between San Benito County, Hollister, and points north.

As part of continued efforts to make safety upgrades to the route, the Council of Governments is currently constructing safety improvements to the route between Hudner Lane and the San Benito/Santa Clara County Line. This work is being done in conjunction with the City of Hollister, County of San Benito, Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority, and Caltrans. Construction is anticipated to be complete in July.

The build alternatives contained in the environmental document would be considered a first phase of improvements to the entire length of State Route 25 between Hollister and Gilroy. Caltrans should continue to support the Council of Governments efforts to seek funding to complete the next phases of work.

The Council of San Benito County Governments offers the following comments:

1. The Council of Governments supports a Route Adoption Alternative and Build Alternative that reduces agricultural land impacts further. Specifically, Caltrans should reduce the median width from 62 feet to 46 feet at a minimum. Caltrans should also terminate the right-of-way line to the outside edge of the embankment ditch.

Council of Governments ♦ Measure A Authority
Airport Land Use Commission ♦ Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways
330 Tres Pinos Road, Suite C7 ♦ Hollister, CA 95023 ♦ Phone: 831.637.7665 ♦ Fax: 831.636.4160
www.sanbenitocog.org

Council of San Benito County Governments, page 2 of 2

G. William "Trais" Norris III
June 17, 2010
Page 2 of 2

2

2. The Council of Governments is concerned about impacts of the project on residences and businesses.

3

3. Although the cost of Build Alternative B is significantly lower than Build Alternative A, COG believes there are additional cost-saving measures that can be implemented with design changes.

4

4. The environmental document should address the issue of landowner access to water between the existing route and the proposed Alternatives. San Benito County supports continued agricultural operations and as such would support an alternative that also supports this objective.

5

5. It appears that Alternatives A and 1 encroach upon the Runway Protection Zone and/or the Inner Safety Zone of Runway 6 of the Hollister Municipal Airport. Caltrans should consult with the City of Hollister and the Airport Land Use Commission regarding this issue.

6

6. Caltrans should elaborate on and further clarify and quantify the reasons for eliminating a conventional highway alternative.

7

7. Caltrans should continue to work with the Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority to coordinate efforts on the State Route 25 and US 101 Interchange project.

8

8. Caltrans should continue to work with the Council of Governments and the Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority to coordinate efforts on the State Route 152 project. The State Route 152 study area has been identified and the environmental document will be prepared over the next 2 years. The Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption project should not preclude a new connection to State Route 152 somewhere between the Pajaro River and Bloomfield Avenue.

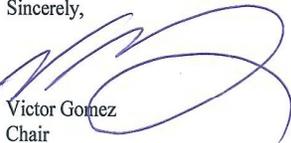
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9. This project requires a great deal of funding and as such Caltrans should work with the Council of Governments and community members in identifying a source of funding and strategy to move forward with this project.

The Council of Governments will continue to work with Caltrans on funding options to make improvements to State Route 25.

Should you have any questions about these comments, please feel free to contact Lisa Rheinheimer, Executive Director at (831) 637-7665.

Sincerely,



Victor Gomez
Chair

cc. Susan Thompson, County of San Benito
Clint Quilter, City of Hollister
Richard Rosales, Caltrans District 5

Council of Governments ♦ Measure A Authority
Airport Land Use Commission ♦ Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways
330 Tres Pinos Road, Suite C7 ♦ Hollister, CA 95023 ♦ Phone: 831.637.7665 ♦ Fax: 831.636.4160
www.sanbenitocog.org

Response to Council of San Benito County Governments

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans has changed the design of the expressway to reduce farmland impacts. A median width of 46 feet will be feasible. We have now obtained the necessary approval for a design exception to use a 46-foot median. The width of the Caltrans right-of-way along the expressway will be reduced from 340 feet to approximately 240 feet by changing the preliminary design for drainage as well as narrowing the median. Also, new frontage roads that would have required acquisition of property (farmland) have been reduced in length from 7.6 miles to 2.1 miles for Alternative 2, or eliminated altogether for Alternative B.

Response to Comment #2: The modified design of Alternative B would eliminate the need for any full right-of-way acquisitions of homes or businesses. Alternative 2, as currently modified, would have fewer right-of-way acquisition impacts than the prior design.

Response to Comment #3: With reduction of the design footprint, the modified design will reduce the cost estimates for this project. Alternative B is estimated to cost \$42,254,000 in 2011 dollars (\$30,769,000 for construction and \$11,485,000 for right-of-way acquisition).

Response to Comment #4: Details of relocations of irrigation system, well relocations, and changed access to San Benito Water District irrigation water are negotiated by the Caltrans Right of Way division during the property acquisition phase of a project.

Response to Comment #5: Caltrans does not believe that the design presented for Alternative A and Alternative 1 would encroach on the Runway Protection Zone and/or the Inner Safety Zone of Runway 6 (the east/west runway) of the Hollister Municipal Airport. If needed, Caltrans will consult with the City of Hollister and the Airport Land Use Commission regarding these alternatives. Note that Alternative B

and Alternative 2, not Alternative A and Alternative 1, have been selected as the preferred alternatives for this project.

Response to Comment #6: The conventional four-lane highway was eliminated as a design alternative in 2003 by the Project Development Team because it did not meet the purpose and need for the project. A major need for the project is to increase the capacity of the roadway to address escalating congestion. The conventional four-lane highway alternative would not reduce direct access to the highway from the many private driveways (approximately 54 in 2003), and slow farm vehicles would continue to share the roadway with commuters. Even with two lanes in each direction, traffic flow would continue to be affected during commute hours with so many driveway openings (currently 31 between San Felipe Road and Hudner Lane). An expressway, on the other hand, would consolidate vehicle access to the highway, reducing the number of locations where through traffic would have to slow down or stop due to vehicles turning onto or off of the expressway. The conventional four-lane highway alternative was also rejected because it would have caused more environmental impacts to widen the existing highway than the proposed alternatives discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement. The conventional four-lane alternative would have affected approximately 13 more businesses, 11 more houses, and \$3.9 million in additional utility relocation costs compared to Alternative 2 as presented in the draft environmental document.

Response to Comment #7: Caltrans has worked and will continue to work with the San Benito Council of Governments and the Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority to coordinate efforts on the U.S. 101 Widening project.

Response to Comment #8: Caltrans has worked and will continue to work with the San Benito Council of Governments and the Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority to coordinate efforts on the State Route 152 project.

Response to Comment #9: Caltrans will continue to assist the Council of Governments with seeking funding outside the State Transportation Improvement Program as well as considering this project to compete for Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funding. Although this route is on the Interregional Road System, it is not an Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan Focus Route, so funding from the ITIP may be challenging.

Individuals

Twenty comments were received via mail, email, and fax during the circulation period. Five commenters had attended the public hearing, and 15 other people submitted comments.

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

My name is Rick Gambetta and I live at 2533 Bolsa Road, Hollister, CA. The property I live on is located west of the Hollister Airport and directly in the path of Alternative A of the proposed State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption plan. This property has been in my family since the early 1900's. The Gambetta Family has experienced eminent domain four times on this property. If Alternative A is chosen, we will be at number five which will basically render the remainder of the property worthless and require the demolition of the family home. With that said, I request that the decision makers regarding the Widening of Highway 25 and Route Adoption would consider not only the above but the facts listed below:

1 - The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

2 - Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

3 - The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

4 - Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

G. William "Trais" Norris, III. Branch Chief
State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption2
May 17, 2010

2

7

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

8

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, I support Alternative B.

9

I am available for any questions or comments regarding the above. Please feel free to contact me at 831-637-9454 or by mail at P.O. Box 1925, Hollister, CA 95024. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.

Respectfully,


Rick Gambetta
2533 Bolsa Road
Hollister, CA 95023

Response to Rick Gambetta

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans has noted that Alternative A would run the length of your family property and require acquisition of your home. The alternative would also bisect your parcels. We noted that your family property has lost acreage four times due to past highway and local road improvements. Alternative B (with modifications) has been selected as the preferred build alternative instead of Alternative A.

Response to Comment #2: The Hollister Municipal Airport plans future expansion in several locations around the airport. Alternative A would be south and west of the airport on property that is in private ownership (including yours). Although this alternative would affect potential commercial development on the west side of the airport, it does not appear to preclude it. Alternative A is not a preferred alternative.

Response to Comment #3: We do not believe that the preliminary design for Alternative A next to the airport would be unsafe or would create a hazard. The design complied with relevant Federal Aviation Administration regulations. However, Alternative A has not been selected as the preferred build alternative; a modified Alternative B was chosen instead.

Response to Comment #4: Your comments regarding growth in Hollister have been noted.

Response to Comment #5: We doubt that enough jobs could be created in San Benito County to reduce existing congestion and future traffic to the extent that the existing two-lane conventional highway would provide an acceptable level of service and safety from 2018 through 2038.

Response to Comment #6: Alternative A as currently designed has an intersection at Flynn Road that would provide access to the airport and the industrial park via Aerostar Way. The build alternatives do not include any ramps in their design. As you

noted, Alternative B would maintain the existing access to the airport and associated industrial park from the south and west.

Response to Comment #7: Your statement regarding the cost of the proposed build alternatives, potential impacts from Alternative A and the uncertainty regarding funding has been noted. Alternative B has been selected as the preferred build alternative. Due to the elimination of some frontage roads, reduced right-of-way acquisition needed, and changes in the economy, this preferred alternative will cost \$19 million less than the design presented in the draft environmental document.

Response to Comment #8: According to the Caltrans Right of Way division, if part or all of a property parcel is placed within a designated route adoption, the property value does not decline, but usually goes up over time. A route adoption would not result in changes in zoning. Zoning is established and controlled by each county, and counties' policies and practices vary. A county can choose to limit types of development within a designated route adoption alignment; however, counties can allow changes to properties, and even construction of buildings within the alignment, with the stipulation that eventually the property would be acquired for construction of the highway.

Response to Comment #9: Caltrans has noted your statement of support for Alternative B.

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

1

My name is Karen Gambetta and I live at 2533 Bolsa Road, Hollister, CA. The property I live on is located west of the Hollister Airport and directly in the path of Alternative A of the proposed State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption plan. This property has been in my husband's family since the early 1900's. The Gambetta Family has experienced eminent domain four times on this property. If Alternative A is chosen, we will be at number five which will basically render the remainder of the property worthless and require the demolition of the family home. With that said, I request that the decision makers regarding the Widening of Highway 25 and Route Adoption would consider not only the above but the facts listed below:

2

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

3

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

4

- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

5

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

6

7

G. William "Trais" Norris, III. Branch Chief
State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption2
May 17, 2010

2

7

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

8

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, I support Alternative B.

9

I am available for any questions or comments regarding the above. Please feel free to contact me at 831-637-9454 or by mail at P.O. Box 1925, Hollister, CA 95024. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.

Respectfully,


Karen Gambetta
2533 Bolsa Road
Hollister, CA 95023

Response to Karen Gambetta

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans has noted that Alternative A would run the length of your husband’s family property and require acquisition of your home; the alternative would also bisect your parcels. We noted that your property has lost acreage four times due to past highway and local road improvements. Alternative B (with modifications) has been selected as the preferred build alternative instead of Alternative A.

Response to Comment #2: The Hollister Municipal Airport plans future expansion in several locations around the airport. Alternative A would be south and west of the airport on property that is in private ownership (including yours). Although this alternative would affect potential commercial development on the west side of the airport it does not appear to preclude it. Alternative A is not a preferred alternative.

Response to Comment #3: We do not believe that the preliminary design for Alternative A would be unsafe or would create a hazard. However, Alternative A has not been selected as the preferred build alternative; a modified Alternative B was chosen instead.

Response to Comment #4: Your comments regarding growth in Hollister have been noted.

Response to Comment #5: We doubt that enough jobs could be created in San Benito County to reduce existing congestion and future traffic to the extent that the existing two-lane conventional highway would provide an acceptable level of service and safety from 2018 through 2038.

Response to Comment #6: Alternative A as currently designed has an intersection at Flynn Road that would provide access to the airport and the industrial park via Aerostar Way. The build alternatives do not include any ramps in their design. As you noted, Alternative B would maintain the existing access to the airport and associated

industrial park from the south and west. Alternative B (modified) has been chosen as the preferred build alternative.

Response to Comment #7: Your statement regarding the cost of the proposed build alternatives, potential impacts from Alternative A and the uncertainty regarding funding is noted. Alternative B (modified) has been selected as the preferred build alternative.

Response to Comment #8: According to the Caltrans Right of Way division, if part or all of a property parcel is placed within a designated route adoption, the property value does not decline, but usually goes up over time. A route adoption would not result in changes in zoning. Zoning is established and controlled by each county, and counties' policies and practices vary. A county can choose to limit types of development within a designated route adoption alignment; however, counties can allow changes to properties, and even construction of buildings within the alignment, with the stipulation that eventually the property would be acquired for construction of the highway.

Response to Comment #9: Caltrans has noted your statement of support for Alternative B.

The following eight letters contain the same text:

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

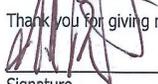
Dear Mr. Norris,

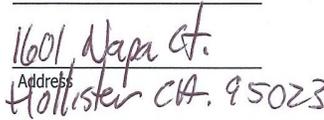
I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- 1 - The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.
- 2 - Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.
- 3 - The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.
- 4 - Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.
- 5 - Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.
- 6 - If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature
Nathan J. Beitez
Name


Address
1601 Napa Ct.
Hollister CA. 95023

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

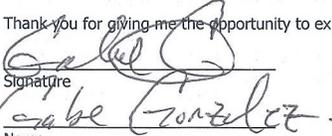
- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature

Name

106 SAN BENITO ST

Hollister CA 95023

Address

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

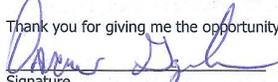
Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.
- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.
- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.
- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.
- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.
- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature
Oscar Gonzalez
Name

2120 CALSTOGA DR
HOLLISTER, CA 95023
Address

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.



Signature
MARK LACASA

Name





Address

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

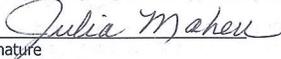
- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature

Julia MAHEU
Name

1854 Cushman

Hollister, CA 95023
Address

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

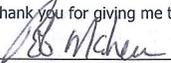
- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature

ROB MAHEU
Name

338 5th st.

Hollister CA 95023
Address

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.

Signature

Name

Address

191 Santa Ana Rd
Hollister CA 95023

Appendix S Comments and Responses

May 17, 2010

G. William "Trais" Norris, III, Branch Chief
Caltrans
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

Re: State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris,

I am a San Benito County concerned citizen and wish to make my opinions known regarding the State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption.

I do not support Alternative A for the following reasons:

- The east to west runway at the Hollister Airport will run perpendicular to Alternative A which will block future expansion of the Airport as well as create unnecessary safety issues due to the proximity of the proposed expressway to the runway.

- Per Table 1-3 "Comparison of Percent Change in Population with Counties Neighboring San Benito County" as provided on the San Benito County Department of Planning website, the growth rate in San Benito County between 1970 and 2000 exceeded the state average. This unprecedented growth is what prompted the San Benito Council of Governments to approach CalTrans for the widening of Highway 25. Since then, due to wastewater concerns and water infrastructure constraints, as well as resultant local growth management programs, the growth rate of San Benito County between 2000 and 2008 was the second slowest growing in our area of Central California. The same website projects growth over the next 9 years to be just over 2% per year, or a gross of approximately 9,000 people in a ten year period.

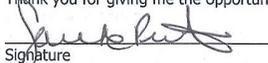
- The mindset of San Benito County ten years ago when the San Benito Council of Government approached CalTrans was that of a "bedroom community". In order for Hollister and San Benito County to survive, it is imperative that this mindset be discarded and replaced with one of job creation within the county. Increased job creation within the county will result in less traffic on Highway 25, thereby removing the need for the widening all together. We currently have a Board of Supervisors that is focused on job creation rather than housing.

- Commercial growth in Hollister and San Benito County is a necessity in order for the area to reduce its Unemployment Rate from the current staggering 22%. The location of the Industrial Park located to the south of the Airport will be threatened by Alternative A because it limits the opportunity for it to expand. Also, Alternative A provides for no on and off ramps to this industrial area. However, Alternative B allows for the current Highway 25 to remain intact, which gives the industrial area the necessary traffic access.

- Alternative A is estimated to cost \$97.6 million, while Alternative B is projected to cost \$61.4 million. The \$36.2 million difference between Alternative A and Alternative B is equal to 59% more. Why would anyone choose to waste this much money when Alternative A not only restricts commercial growth in the surrounding areas, affects more families and parcels, limits access to the Airport and Industrial Park and creates a safety hazard? Not to mention that the current financial status of the State of California is lacking the required means to fund this project.

- If Alternative A is the approved route for expansion, parcels in that pathway will be deemed undesirable for sale, having been marked as a site for future eminent domain, subsequently rendering the property worthless and nontransferable. Therefore, we support Alternative B.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.


Signature

Sara A. Puentes
Name

1406 San Benito St.

Hollister, CA 95023
Address

Response to Nathan J. Benitez, Oscar Gonzales, Gabe Gonzalez, Mark Lacasa, Julia Maheu, Rob Maheu, Luis Negrete, and Sara A. Puentes

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: We do not think that planned future expansion associated with the Hollister Municipal Airport would be prevented by construction of Alternative A, nor would the expressway cause safety issues in relationship to the east/west airport runway. However, Alternative B (modified), rather than Alternative A, has been selected as the preferred alternative.

Response to Comment #2: We do not believe that Alternative A, as currently designed, would be unsafe or would create a hazard in relationship to the east/west airport runway. However, Alternative A has not been selected as the preferred build alternative; a modified Alternative B was chosen instead.

Response to Comment #3: Your comments regarding growth in Hollister have been noted.

Response to Comment #4: It is unlikely that enough jobs could be created in San Benito County to reduce existing congestion and future traffic to the extent that the existing two-lane conventional highway would provide an acceptable level of service and safety between 2015 and 2035.

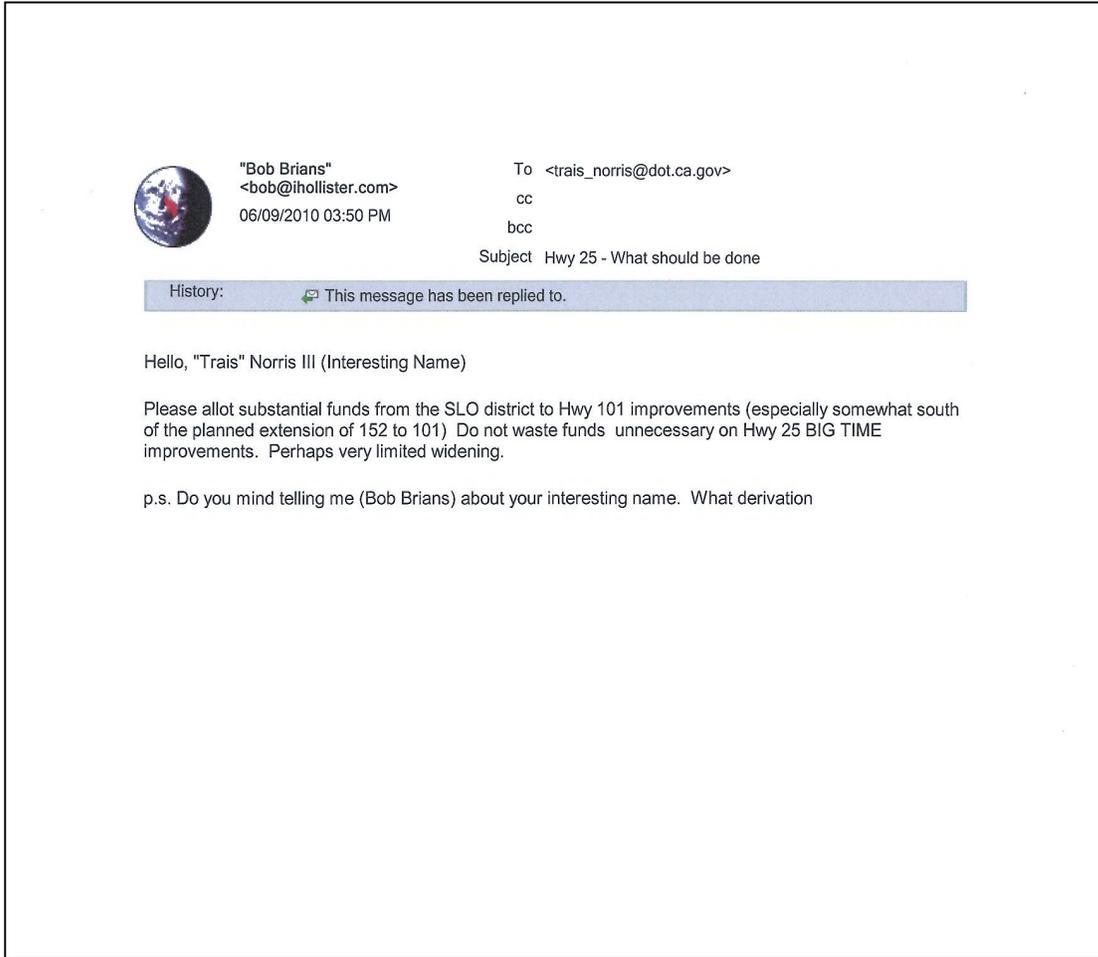
Response to Comment #5: Alternative A as currently designed has an intersection at Flynn Road that would provide access to the airport and the industrial park via Aerostar Way. The build alternatives do not include any ramps in their design. As you noted, Alternative B would maintain the existing access to the airport and associated industrial park from the south and west. Alternative B (modified) has been chosen as the preferred build alternative.

Response to Comment #6: Your statement regarding the cost of the proposed build alternatives, potential impacts from Alternative A, and the uncertainty regarding

funding is noted. Alternative B (modified) has been selected as the preferred build alternative.

Response to Comment #7: According to the Caltrans Right of Way division, if part or all of a property parcel is placed within a designated route adoption, the property value does not decline, but usually goes up over time. A route adoption would not result in changes in zoning. Zoning is established and controlled by each county, and counties' policies and practices vary. A county can choose to limit types of development within a designated route adoption alignment; however, counties can allow changes to properties, and even construction of buildings within the alignment, with the stipulation that eventually the property would be acquired for construction of the highway.

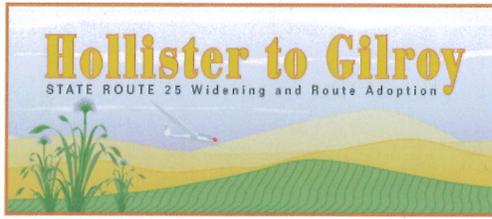
Response to Comment #8: Caltrans has noted your statement of support for Alternative B.



Response to Bob Briens

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

This project will not take funds away from other needed project improvements on US 101.



Public Hearing
State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Project
May 11, 2010

NAME: George Rajkovich

ADDRESS: 1448 Bolsa Road CITY: Hollister ZIP: 95023

REPRESENTING: _____

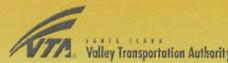
Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list? YES NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box tonight or mail to the address on the back of this page, or you can email trais_norris@dot.ca.gov

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

please see attached

05-10540_P1_Web_2-6-10



RAJKOVICH BROS.

P.O. Box 189 Hollister, CA 95024
(831) 637-3701 FAX (831) 637-4667

May 18, 2010

Caltrans
Attn: Trais Norris, Senior Environmental Planner
2015 E. Shields Avenue, Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93728

Re: State Route 25 Hollister to Gilroy Widening Project

Dear Trais,

1 My name is George Rajkovich. I am a concerned resident and property owner along the State Route 25 in Hollister. My brother and I have farmed land along Highway 25 for over 50 years; our Fairhaven Orchards cherry, apricot and walnut trees line a large part of the land where you are proposing your widening project. I was able to attend your Public Scoping Meeting on April 3, 2008 and May 11, 2010 at R.O. Hardin School in Hollister. In response to that, I would like to reiterate my thoughts to you on the plans that you have proposed. The plans described below may be familiar due to the fact that I previously sent this to you in April 2008. The proposed maps that I viewed were quite unsettling, and are bound to cause a major impact on my farming operations and everyday living. I hope that you will take some time to consider the impact that both myself and my neighbors face with this widening project.

Alternative 1/A:

2 This plan causes the most devastating impact to both my farming operations and all of my surrounding neighbor's properties. This proposed alternative would clear out two homes, one domestic well, and pieces of the orchards that I own on Briggs Road. In addition, it would eliminate the Rajkovich Brothers office, three additional homes, agriculture well as well as our operational packing shed and several storage sheds at 4153 Bolsa Road. Our property along Hudner lane would be greatly damaged as well; leaving us without an agriculture well, several working machine shops, a fenced storage yard, and another home with a domestic well.

3 Not only does this proposed alternative greatly devastate our land, it greatly affects our neighbor's property as well. Our longtime neighbors, Frank and Roselyn Corda have resided on this property before I started farming here. This project would destroy their home, leaving only a piece of empty land. Our other neighbor, Richard Hershey would be left without his home and Auto Body Shop. Our newest neighbor, South Valley Trailers would be forced to relocate for a second time. This is just to name a few
4 in my immediate area. I see no benefit to this proposed widening plan, and adamantly oppose it.

5

Alternative 2/B:

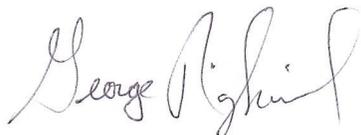
This plan also greatly impacts my land, but in light of that, it is a better alternative. As it stands, your project would cut through the back of my land twice, forcing the land into 3 parcels. This parcel split is caused where the Highway 25 widening and Briggs Road extension meet. Our current irrigation improvements on this portion of our land have cost us in excess of \$100,000, and seeing this proposed map greatly disappoints me. I would appreciate if you could take the time to consider a straightening of the Briggs Road extension directly across the property line in order to minimize the financial impact on my land and farming operations.

6

My Proposal:

I understand that the Route 25 Widening Project is something that is necessary to improve our community. However, I would like you to take the time to consider some additional alternatives. It seems like the least destructive and most common-sense option for this project would be to take this the highway along the existing San Felipe Road, which is already a 4-lane highway. The route would start along the Grant Line (See Alternative 2) and meet up with Highway 156, taking you directly in front of the Hollister Airport and connecting with the current Highway 25 bypass. This proposal would have little to no impact, and in my eyes is the only way to solve this massive devastation of both mine and my neighbor's cherished properties. I would greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



George Rajkovich

Rajkovich Brothers

Response to George Rajkovich

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Thank you for attending both the public scoping meeting for this project held on April 3, 2008 and the public hearing held on May 11, 2010 during circulation of the draft environmental document. We appreciated receiving your comments in 2008 and took them into consideration as we moved forward on the project.

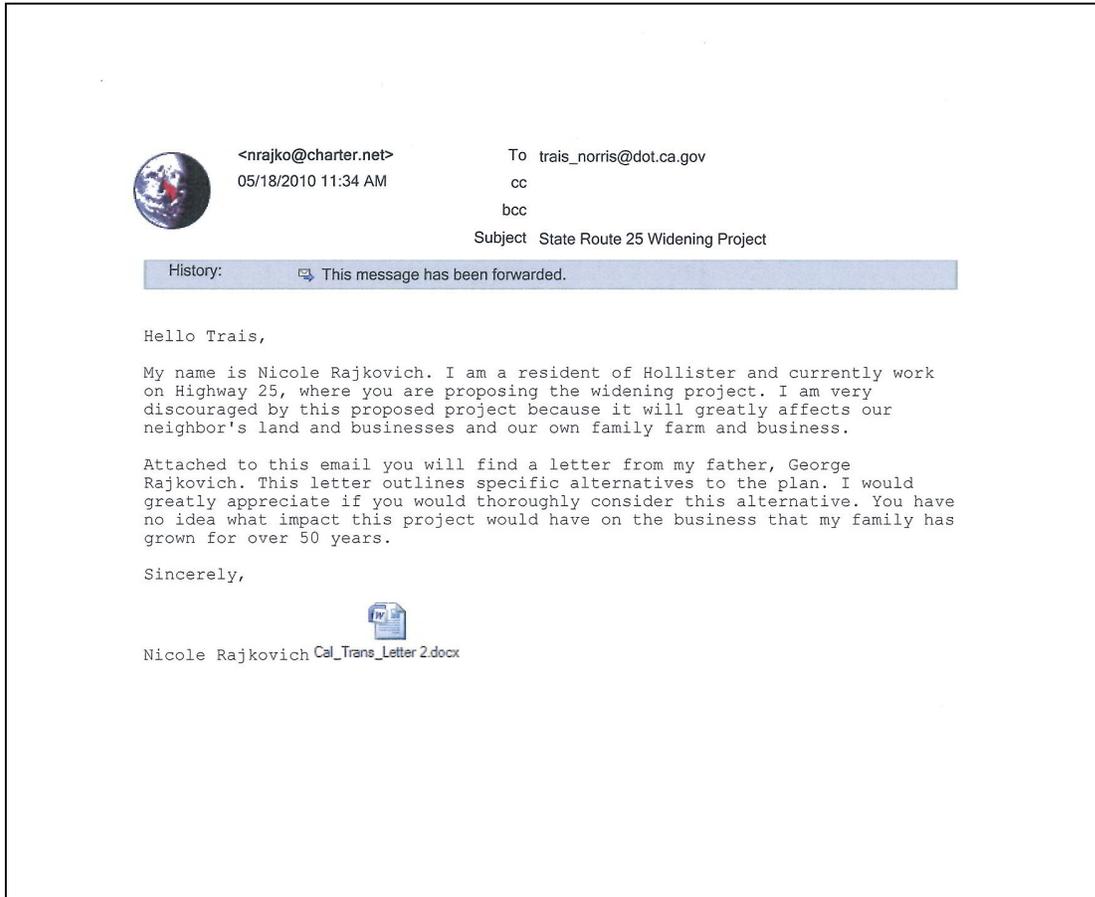
Response to Comment #2: We have noted the specific impacts that you stated would be caused by Alternative A to your farming operations, office, packing house, and houses. Alternative B (modified) has been chosen as the preferred build alternative, and Alternative 2 (modified) has been selected as the preferred route adoption alternative, rather than Alternative A and Alternative 1.

Response to Comment #3: We have noted the impacts that you mentioned that some of your neighbors would incur if Alternative A were built. The impacts to homes and businesses along Alternative A, as well as the cost of right-of-way acquisition, were a factor in the decision to select Alternative B (modified) as the preferred build alternative.

Response to Comment #4: Caltrans has noted that you are opposed to Alternative A and Alternative 1.

Response to Comment #5: As stated above, Alternative B and Alternative 2 have been modified and selected as the preferred alternatives. The proposed extension of Briggs Road that would cut through the hill on your property next to the Sheriffs' Training Center has been dropped from Alternative B, and so has the west side frontage road, however the expressway would still cut diagonally across the western portion of the parcel. Route adoption Alternative 2 would retain the westward extension of Briggs Road, but the design for the new road has been brought closer to the northern property line of the parcel. There is no proposed construction year for the extension of Briggs Road; there is no need for it for the foreseeable future.

Response to Comment #6: You proposed that State Route 25 be rerouted entirely around the area between the San Felipe Road intersection and Hudner Lane where the build alternatives are proposed. Unfortunately, although it has been widened to four lanes, San Felipe Road does not meet Caltrans design standards for an expressway. This segment provides access to local businesses as State Route 156 (Business). If an expressway were to be constructed on the existing alignment, some or all of the existing businesses would have to be relocated. The remaining businesses, residences, and farms would no longer have direct access onto San Felipe Road, so frontage roads would need to be built as part of the project to provide them access. Caltrans does not consider this proposed alternative to be feasible because it would require out-of-direction travel, affect a number of businesses and some residences, and have high property acquisition and relocation costs.



Response to Nicole Rajkovich

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Caltrans has noted your comment regarding the impacts of the proposed project on your family farm business. We appreciate that you sent your father's comment to us via email ahead of the mailed copy.

Appendix S Comments and Responses



Jlschob@aol.com
06/10/2010 02:28 PM

To trais_norris@dot.ca.gov
cc
bcc
Subject DEIR Comment due June 10, 2010 re. State Route 25
Widening, San Benito Co.

History: This message has been forwarded.

To G. William "Trais" Norris III
Caltrans

- 1
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I'm Jeannette Langstaff living in a small home at 1631 Tiburon Dr., Hollister, for the last 18 years. My former husband and I, with our two young children had moved from San Jose in 1978. Our plan was a better environment to raise our family in. We purchased a home on an acre off Santa Ana Rd. for those 14 years. Having lived here through all these years, I'm opposed to a huge expressway destroying this agriculture land and open space, and the potential for being another big city! What you are doing is simply making long-distance commute easier and promoting sprawl! That is in opposition to current and necessary regulations, lessening greenhouse gas emissions and destroying environment. I am stressing "No Action Alternative" and just to continue the Safety Project in progress now, keeping the two-lane highway we have.

First of all, there are atleast 3 separate projects being proposed or in planning: hwy 156; hwy 25; and COG's planning for possible hwy 129 exchange and road connection across ag land to hwy 152. Your agencies need to decide on which plan is the best we residents would want for our county's vision. "At pace with the changing world but still rural in nature, our vision of San Benito County in 2035 is of a positive and prosperour future; in which a balance has been attained between business and residential growth without surrendering our rich natural resources, valuable agricultural assets, active country character, or our historical heritage.

Your Proposed Development, P.33 (DEIR) has errors. El Rancho has withdrawn application for 6,800 units and should not be a projected population. Also Fairview Corners is not in the EIR stage. It is a separate project with our County and is only in the application stage for its 220 units. With the economic downturn our whole county is in, and especially our state, there are too many foreclosures, unemployment and people staying closer to home. Money needs to be spent on other priorities. Public transportation is the best means for the future with jobs close to where we already live -- Not destroying ag land and open space with life-giving benefits, not poluting the environment with massive construction and overpaving.

I'm sending in this comment to be included in the EIR's opposition to this 4-lane expressway. "No Action" is the wise alternative, to just complete the safety work in process now and maintain the conventional two-lane highway 25. There are too many plans in the pipeline for San Benito County which can ruin the health and welfare it affords us and the whole region. You need to get together with the agencies and come up with one project that indicates the purpose for saving the environment and not destroying it -- not just making commuting easier for jobs far away and promoting urban sprawl.

Jeannette Langstaff, (831) 636-1491
jlschob@aol.com

Response to Jeannette Langstaff

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Regarding your concern about the amount of farmland and open space that would be lost if an expressway were built, Caltrans has reduced the design footprint of the preferred alternatives, route adoption Alternative 2 and build Alternative B. The changes include reducing the median width from 62 feet to 46 feet, reducing the minimum right-of-way width from 342 feet to 240 feet, and moving the new alignment closer to the existing highway. In addition, frontage roads proposed on new alignment have been reduced by 5.5 miles for Alternative 2, and eliminated altogether from Alternative B. Also, the proposed Briggs Road extension was dropped from Alternative B. The amount of paving and other hard surfaces that would result from building Alternative B has been reduced to 31.2 acres.

The design changes will result in 163 fewer acres of right-of-way needed for Alternative 2, and 62 fewer acres needed for the build Alternative B (all of this acreage is considered to be farmland). In addition to saving farmland acres by changing the design, Caltrans will mitigate for lost farmland purchasing conservation easements, as well as providing relocation benefits to affected farmers.

Response to Comment #2: San Benito County experienced rapid population growth during the 1990s caused by the construction of new housing in the Hollister area. Many of the new residents commuted to Santa Clara County, and this created congestion and safety problems on State Route 25 between Hollister and US 101, a rural two-lane highway. The State Route 25 Widening project was proposed to address the problems caused by the increasing traffic on the highway. Widening a highway or constructing an expressway does not cause growth by itself; the project type is just one factor that could contribute to growth in an area.

Caltrans performed an analysis of the potential for growth to be caused by the project and concluded that neither the build alternatives nor the route adoption alternatives would induce growth. The interrelated factors of accessibility, project type, project

location, and growth pressure were analyzed by Caltrans. Please see Section 3.1.2 Growth in Volume I of the final environmental document, which now includes additional text.

Response to Comment #3: Construction of an expressway would relieve congestion, and that reduces greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. Caltrans projects must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and many other environmental laws. That is why Caltrans conducted environmental studies and prepared this Environmental Impact Report/~~Tier I Environmental Impact Statement~~.

Response to Comment #4: Caltrans has noted that you are in favor of the No-Action Alternative.

Response to Comment #5: Improvements are needed on all local highways in northern San Benito County and southern Santa Clara County: State Routes 156, 129, 101, and 152. Construction of only one project cannot solve all the congestion, traffic delays, and circulation problems that occur on the state highway and local roads network in the area.

Response to Comment #6: Although the proposed El Rancho San Benito development was mentioned in the draft document, it also noted that the application had been withdrawn. The final environmental document has been updated. Thank you for your comment regarding the Fairview Corners development EIR status. The Final Environmental Impact Report for that project was issued in March 2012.

Response to Comment #7: We acknowledge your view that money should be spent on public transportation and creating more local jobs rather than on an expressway project.

Response to Comment #8: We acknowledge that you are in favor of the No-Action Alternative and are opposed to construction of a four-lane expressway.

Response to Comment #9: In 2006, San Benito County Board of Supervisors, the Council of San Benito County Governments, and the City of Gilroy passed similar resolutions identifying widening these three highways to four lanes as the highest priority transportation projects for the county and region: State Route 152 between State Route 156 and US 101, State Route 156 between The Alameda and Union Road, and State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and US 101. It would not be

possible to meet the transportation needs of San Benito County by making improvements to only one of these routes.

TO CAL TRANS

COMMENTS/ HIGHWAY 25, SAN BENITO COUNTY

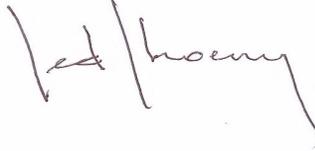
To whom it may concern,

Recommendation to join S.H 25 AND S.H. 152 East of U.S. 101 with common interchange at U.S. 101 for trucks and commuter traffic going to and from Monterey County, as well as Santa Clara County and the Central Valley. (see attached map)

Eliminate need for truck and commuter traffic on S.H. 156 through San Benito County.

Widen S.H. 25 to accommodate and increase traffic safety without expressway status, development of the Bolsa Valley between Gilroy and Hollister is unknown at this time. June 9, 2010.

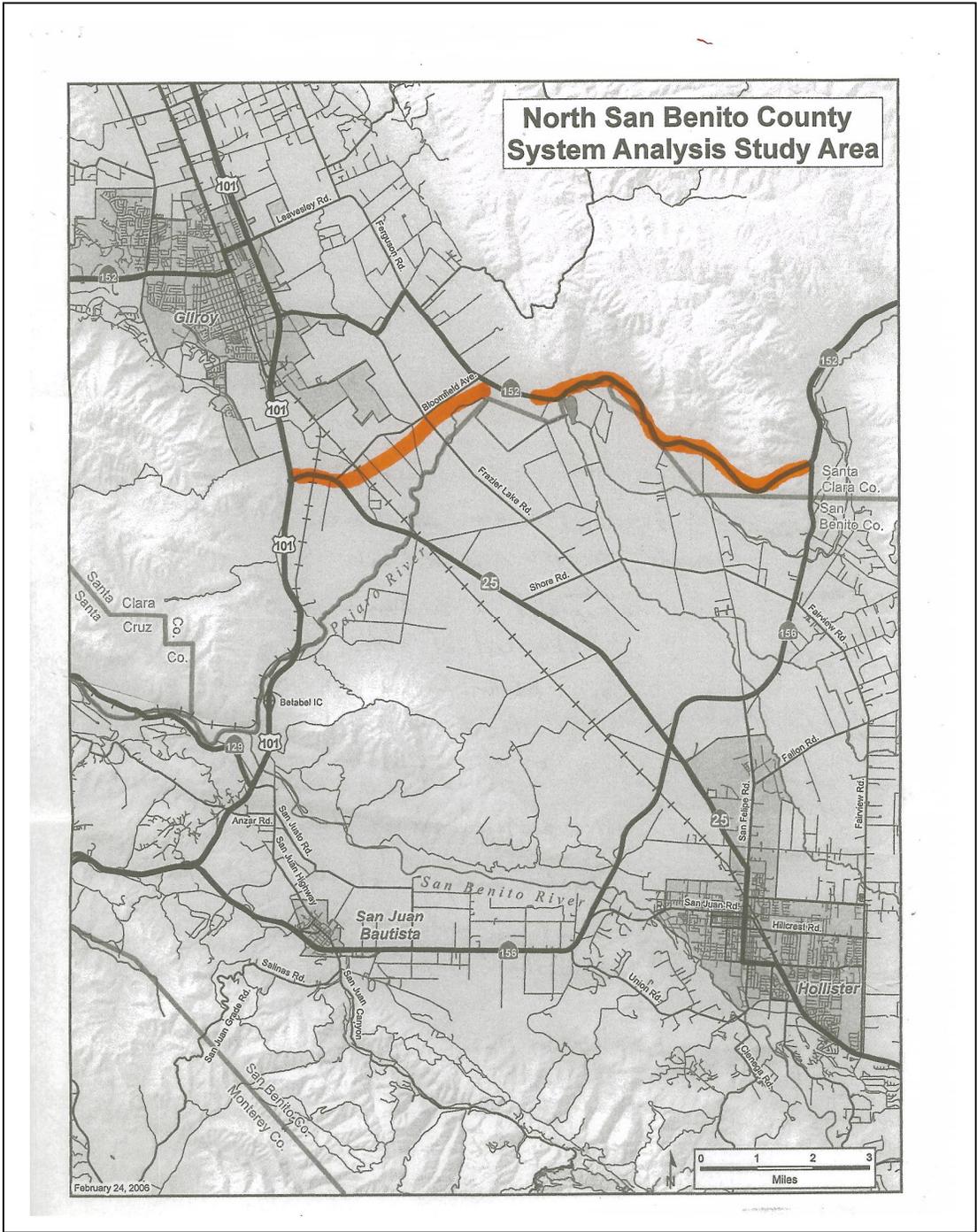
Regards, ted thoeny p.e.
San Benito County Resident



1

2

3



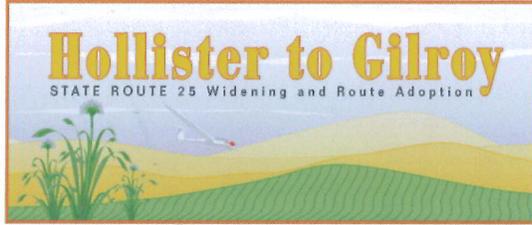
Response to Ted Thoeny

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Your recommendation to join State Route 25 and State Route 152 east of US 101 has been noted. The State Route 152 realignment route adoption study, which would connect State Route 25 to State Route 152, is currently underway.

Response to Comment #2: It is not possible to eliminate the need for truck and commuter traffic on State Route 156 through San Benito County. Trucks are a vital part of the local agricultural economy and provide essential goods movement. Many residents are commuters; they must commute to be employed. State highways are provided for all segments of the driving public.

Response to Comment #3: Your suggestion to widen State Route 25 as a conventional highway rather than constructing an expressway has been noted. See Section 2.2.6 of Volume I of the final environmental document for a discussion of this proposed alternative.



Public Hearing
State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Project
May 11, 2010

NAME: Donald and Carol Hart
ADDRESS: 1621 Memorial Dr. CITY: Hollister ZIP: 95023
REPRESENTING: _____

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list? YES NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box tonight or mail to the address on the back of this page, or you can email trais_norris@dot.ca.gov

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

1

As property owners of 2730 Bolsa Road, we have approx. 75 acres of currently farmed land. On this property we have 2 irrigation wells and an inground pipeline system the length of the farmable acreage that connects us to the "Blue Valve" of Federal water. This Valve is located at the back of the property near the railroad tracks.

2

Alternative B would dissect our farmland in half making it difficult, if not impossible to farm. It also appears we would be cut-off from our current water supply. Previously, our ranch acreage was negatively impacted by the Highway 156 bypass.

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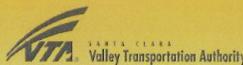
Therefore, we are strongly opposed to Alternative B!

4

In closing, has consideration been given to extending the current 4-lane San Felipe Road out to the 101. It seems as though prime farmland would not be sacrificed by this alternative.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Don and Carol Hart*

05-15540_pd_snet_5-6-10



Response to Donald and Carol Hart

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Relocation and partial or full replacement of irrigation systems and wells would be covered by Caltrans relocation benefits. Wells within the footprint of the project would be properly abandoned.

Response to Comment #2: Caltrans was able to redesign the expressway to parallel the northern edge of your parcels (but south of the farmstead). Although acquisition from the parcels would still be needed for the preferred alternative, the farm fields would not be bisected.

Response to Comment #3: Caltrans has noted that your property was affected in the past by the construction of the State Route 156 Bypass. Your opposition to Alternative B is also noted.

Response to Comment #4: Although San Felipe Road has four lanes now south of its intersection with State Route 156, it does not meet the design standards required for an expressway, including median width, storage or conveyance ditches, utility requirements, intersection spacing, frontage roads, and access control. The roadway would have to be widened further, and pavement would be removed and redone. Right-of-way acquisition would be necessary along both sides of the road, affecting most homes and businesses. Many acres of farmland, including prime farmland, would be needed for an alternative on the San Felipe Road alignment. It is unclear whether you are suggesting that San Felipe Road be followed northwards to Dunn Road to State Route 152, or that it would turn onto State Route 156. If the latter, 2 miles of out-of-direction travel would be added to each trip between Hollister and Gilroy.

Thursday, June 10, 2010

ATTENTION: Mr. G. William "Trais" Norris III,
Branch Chief
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans)
2015 East Shields Avenue,
Suite# 100
Fresno, CA 93726

RE: Draft EIR of Proposed Route 25 Widening Between Hollister and Gilroy

Dear Mr. Norris:

In regards to proposed route options of the proposed Route 25 widening between Hollister and Gilroy and the subsequent development of an expressway thus expressed in the Draft EIR of Proposed Route 25 Widening, there are several critical problems with Cal Trans plans for the Highway 25 widening.

1

1.) In all of the proposed routes, acres and acres of prime farmland is going to be ruined and taken out of farming production. Prime farmland is of major importance because of its vital necessity to the local and state economy plus it is both a natural and national resource which obviously they are not making more of and in fact has been continually shrinking. With the present economic downturn and world situation, it is the one form of production for which there will always be demand and will continue to supply jobs and feed the hungry. Several thriving farm operations are going to be adversely affected if not outright destroyed.

2

2.) Also, within these plans of highway and support frontage road construction, access and safe egress between the farm parcels would be extremely difficult if not impossible or inherently dangerous. The vital efficient structural development of either row crop or orchards required for agriculture would be severely affected, thus drastically reducing the desirability of the land for agricultural purposes and thus this productive use would be curtailed.

3

3.) Since the Highway 25 widening would primarily be funded by local taxes and impact fees from the County of San Benito, the necessary funds to build the nearly half billion dollar project would take at least 20 years and probably much longer if ever to accumulate during a dire economic period of this states history with many needs competing for the same meager limited funding sources. At this time, the State of California's debt is several billion dollars and growing. If the design of this plan is accepted without funding, then the farmers and landowners in the affected areas will

4

immediately be adversely impacted by the clouding of the future land use valuation of their property, with what amounts to a red-tag of this proposed project hanging over the titles to their properties. The valuation of their land for agriculture and other uses would drastically drop with this clouding of the titles over their future possession and use of the property, with compensation for this loss in value not to come until some much future date if ever. The economic impact would be that this could have the effect of reducing how much the owner can borrow against the land to fund current and future agricultural or other operations or the owners' ability to rent out the land or if necessary, what they would get if they had to sell the property. This, in essence, wrapping of a stone to the titles of these properties, is both unnecessary and unfair to owners of lands largely engaged in the production of important agricultural products and jobs. Since the project funding is off in the distant future, by the time the project commences, if ever, it will likely have been significantly changed and modified to meet the future needs and circumstances of that day which will most likely be quite different.

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Since there is no state or local funding for this large elaborate project for now or the foreseeable future, this project either needs to be tabled (Option 5) or other smaller less costly and less land use impacting alternatives need to be consider which have a much greater chance of being funded in the near future. Otherwise you are simple unfairly clouding the titles of many property owners for a distant future project that may never occur. Below is a new alternative which I believe needs to be considered.

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The Four-Lane Conventional Highway Alternative NEEDS to be added back for further discussion along with additional alternatives and sub-alternatives. A study should be done with this alternative with the four-lane widening only taking place on Hwy 25 between the Hwy 25 and Hwy 156 interchange north to Santa Clara County. At the Hwy 25/156 intersection traffics feeds from three directions on and off the north side of Hwy 25. Many of the traffic, residence and commercial buildings impacts and environmental concerns are from altering the shorter stretch between the Hwy 25/156 interchange and San Felipe Road. Further, there are a lot of costs and negative agricultural impacts that result from the creation of an enlarged interchange structure intersect with the proposed Hwy 25 roadways that wouldn't be incurred if the existing structure was used and only widened towards the north. The concern over the need for movement of the power utility lines along Hwy 25 north should be tempered with the fact that these lines are known to be old and archaic and that are not shielded interfering regularly with car radios and need to be replaced in the near further anyway.

Thank you for your time.

CC—This letter also sent via email on Thursday, June 10, 2010



Response to Thomas R. Hart

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: We acknowledge your concerns regarding the loss of prime farmland. Unfortunately, the abundance of prime farmland next to State Route 25 in the project area makes it impossible to avoid direct impacts with any highway widening. Caltrans has redesigned the preferred alternative to reduce the amount of farmland needed for the build project.

Response to Comment #2: The main reason that frontage roads would be built is to provide safe access to farm fields for farm equipment and people.

Response to Comment #3: Your comments regarding funding for construction and the current state budget crisis are noted.

Response to Comment #4: Property values would not be negatively affected by a route adoption. Zoning, which is implemented and updated by each county, would not change due to the adoption of a new route in the county's General Plan. Although a county could choose to limit types of development within a designated route adoption alignment, typically county governments allow changes and construction of buildings within the alignment with the stipulation that eventually the property would be acquired for construction of the highway.

Response to Comment #5: The route adoption alternatives would simply designate a corridor for future construction projects. Although preliminary design has been prepared for this project, additional preliminary design would be done in the future when funding is obtained for construction of another portion of the alignment. The final design would be completed following preparation of a Tier II environmental document that would analyze the project at that time.

Response to Comment #6: You stated that you are in favor of tabling the project or reducing the scale, impacts and cost of alternatives. Caltrans has done this. Property values would not go down due to a route adoption, but they may go up. Land titles would not be clouded; the route adoption would be delineated on parcel maps so that the public could see where the future expressway would be.

Response to Comment #7: Caltrans redesigned the alternatives to reduce the median width to 46 feet, to reduce the width of the side ditches, and to reconfigure some frontage roads to reduce the amount of right-of-way needed from farmland, thus reducing project cost as well. The design in the area of the intersection with State Route 156 was pulled closer to the existing State Route 25 alignment.

Response to Comment #8: Additional information on the four-lane conventional highway alternative that was rejected earlier in the project development process can be found in Section 2.1.5. Your suggestion to study widening the existing highway to a four-lane highway on the existing alignment between State Route 156 and US 101 has been noted. This would not be acceptable because the project alternatives must connect to the end of the State Route 25 Bypass at San Felipe Road to meet the

Federal Highway Administration's requirement that a highway project have logical termini, or end points.

Response to Comment #9: Most project impacts would occur with Alternative A, between San Felipe Road and Hudner Lane. Alternative B was designed so that many of those impacts could be avoided by veering off into farm fields, so Alternative B would affect more acres of farmland.

Response to Comment #10: The build alternatives, Alternative A and Alternative B, do not propose any structures (bridges) at the intersection of State Routes 25 and 156, and there are no existing bridges there now. An interchange is proposed for that location in the future as a separate project, but would not be needed for many years.

Response to Comment #11: Your comment about utility line relocation on State Route 25 is noted. Utility lines are relocated shortly before construction of a highway project begins.

6/8/10

G. William "Trais" Norris III
 Branch Chief, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
 California Dept. of Transportation
 2015 E. Shields Ave #100
 Fresno, CA 93726

RE: Draft EIR & Draft Tier 1 EIS, State Route 25
 Widening & Route Adoption

Dear Mr. Norris:

1

After reviewing the Draft EIR & Tier 1 Draft EIS for State Route 25 (Draft EIR/EIS), considering the role of this route moving traffic today and the future needs both locally and regionally, I support Alternative 2 (Alt 2) for the Route Adoption and Alternative B (Alt B) for the Build Alternative. I also support utilizing the existing route as much as possible west of the Hwy 25/156 Intersection as well as utilizing the smallest median possible to help reduce the acreage of needed land.

2

3

While widening the existing route was only casually mentioned and not considered an alternative in the document, I believe a separate section outlining the costs, required acreage, environmental impacts, impacts to existing businesses and utilities should have been included. If this information currently exists, it should be provided as an addendum to this document to help provide the needed data for individuals to better understand and accept the magnitude of this project while considering both of the Alternatives.

4

Since this project will not be constructed in the near future, we need to seriously consider this and look into the future from a planning and development point of view. The following are reasons for my support of Alt 2 over Alt 1 or widening the existing route (even though it is not being considered):

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- Limited access for a quicker and safer trip, fewer stoplight and more consistent speeds produce fewer emissions and cleaner air.
- Alt 2 provides a cost savings, affects fewer homes and businesses.
- Requires the acquisition of right-of-way from almost half the number of parcels.
- Fewer impacts on the environment and threatened and endangered species.
- Alt 2 allows the traffic utilizing existing facilities, residents and businesses to use the frontage road, rather than mixing with commute/through traffic.
- Will allow for in-fill of future residential, commercial and industrial development in the area with fewer/no impacts from the project.
- The provided frontage roads by the project will provide for the neighboring parcels' needs of today and the future. Although the maintenance of these frontage roads will be the County's, their initial construction will be part of the project (if the existing road was widened, this would have led to either the County or developers constructing these frontage roads in the future).

6

From a funding standpoint, I think it is important to establish who will be the responsible party for improvements that extend into Santa Clara County at the western end of the project. If Hwy 152 is constructed in the future to connect with Hwy 25 in the vicinity of the Santa Clara/San Benito County Line, I would think the improvements to Hwy 25 related to this project in Santa Clara County, would be their responsibility. If however, Hwy 152 is not intended to connect with Hwy 25 and taken off all planning documents related to Hwy 25, it needs to be established who is responsible for the

Appendix S Comments and Responses

06/10/2010 17:45 FAX 831 637 6187

PENNY WISE DRUG

002

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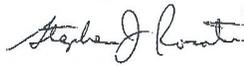
improvements in Santa Clara County. Although this may not be considered an integral part of the EIR, I² believe this responsibility needs to be identified as part of this document so no misunderstandings occur in the future! The document should also include the financial roles/responsibilities of any future developments that occur in the area and their contributions to the construction of this project from beginning to end.

8

It is important to mention in the EIR that Caltrans, the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, San Benito County Council of Governments, Mobility Partnership, City of Gilroy and Santa Clara County VTA all recognize that Hwy 25 provides for the traffic needs of a separate corridor from that of Hwy 152 and Hwy 156. I say this as a reminder that improvement to Hwy 156 between Hollister and San Juan Bautista are a separate issue from Hwy 25, and will not serve as a "3 in 1", as pointed out by Judge Steve Sanders in Superior Court.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Rosati
549 San Benito St.
Hollister, CA 95023

Response to Stephen J. Rosati

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Thank you for indicating your support for Alternative 2 and Alternative B.

Response to Comment #2: We have noted that you support using the existing route as much as possible in the alternatives design west of the intersection of State Routes 25 and 156. Most of the existing highway in this area would be used for frontage roads.

Response to Comment #3: You stated that you support designing as narrow a median as possible so that less land would need to be acquired for the project. Caltrans has reduced the width of the median from 62 feet to 46 feet.

Response to Comment #4: Simply widening the existing highway was not brought forward as a fully developed alternative in 2003 because preliminary studies showed that almost all homes and businesses along the highway would have to be removed. This alternative would have caused significant impacts to wetlands, rare and endangered species, historic sites, prehistoric archaeological sites, and historic archaeological sites as well. This alternative would not have had access control or frontage roads, so all of the local roads and driveways would have entered directly onto the highway, slowing traffic and increasing the chance of accidents.

Response to Comment #5: Thank you for listing the reasons that you support Alternative 2.

Response to Comment #6: Santa Clara County, through the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), is responsible for obtaining funding for projects within that county. San Benito County, through the Council of San Benito County Governments (COG), is responsible for obtaining projects within their county boundaries. If a project is in more than one county, the funding is usually obtained by each county for the portion of the project within its boundaries.

Response to Comment #7: No money has been provided to this project by any developers. Counties charge developers traffic impact fees. San Benito County has decided not to use traffic impact fee funds for this project as was planned, but to use the funds for local road maintenance instead.

Response to Comment #8: Thank you for this comment about State Routes 25, 152, and 156 being separate transportation corridors. The San Benito County Board of Supervisors, the Council of San Benito County Governments, and the City of Gilroy passed similar resolutions in 2006 declaring that widening these three highways to four lanes to be the highest priority transportation projects for the county and region: State Route 152 between State Route 156 and US 101, State Route 156 between The Alameda and Union Road, and State Route 25 between San Felipe Road and US 101. Focusing on only one of these highways for improvements would not address the transportation needs of San Benito County.



Diane Farmer
<rokrose@redshift.com>
05/25/2010 08:39 AM

To trais_norris@dot.ca.gov
cc b resetar Brad <bresetar@comcast.net>
Subject highway 25 widening Bloonfield Ranch

Hello Trais

I represent the historic Bloomfield Ranch which borders route 25 and Highway 101. Our family was unable to provide representation at the recent meeting but we want to acknowledge the receipt of the EIR statement.

Can you share your opinion as to the likelihood of this project receiving funding in the near future?

We appreciate your effort to keep us informed and look forward to hearing more about this project.

Thank you

Diane Resetar Farmer
Bloomfield Ranch LLC

831 335 2847 Brad Resetar
831 625 6528 Diane Resetar Farmer

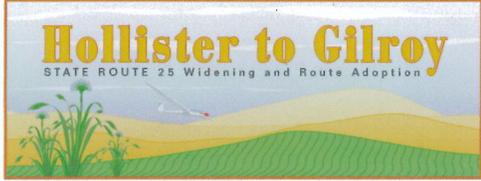
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Response to Diane Farmer

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Public Hearing Comment Cards

Two comment cards were turned in at the public hearing held for the project.



Public Hearing
State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Project
May 11, 2010

NAME: Herbert 637-4121
ADDRESS: POB 162 CITY: Hollister ZIP: 95024
REPRESENTING: Land Owners

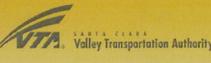
Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list? YES NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box tonight or mail to the address on the back of this page, or you can email trais_norris@dot.ca.gov

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

What is the take on each option
to our parcels on McConnel Rd
& Hwy 25?

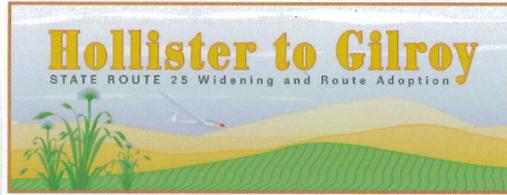
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Response to Herbert

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Caltrans mailed you specific information regarding potential right-of-way acquisition acreage and also preliminary design maps that show your property on McConnell Road and State Route 25.



Public Hearing

State Route 25 Widening and Route Adoption Project

May 11, 2010

NAME: Joe Tonascia

ADDRESS: 2325 Southside Rd CITY: Hollister ZIP: 95023

REPRESENTING: Tonascia Farms, Bentuccio Orchards, Hayhurst Farming

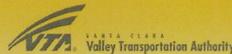
Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list? YES NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box tonight or mail to the address on the back of this page, or you can email trais_norris@dot.ca.gov

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

* Not in favor of any projects or alternates! Think that widening current as best solutions (don't reinvent the whole wheel). Should be or have checked on potential salamander or wet land habitats before picking a route to see if existing routes. The taking of prime ag ground by all alternatives from San Felipe Rd to Hudner Rd, mine especially since it is certified organic. Maybe a route that ties San Felipe Rd at 156 across to 25 or 25 bypass out along San Benito River to 101 or way to the west of rail tracks against hill out to 101

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Response to Joe Tonascia

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans has noted that you are not in favor of any of the proposed alternatives.

Response to Comment #2: Widening the existing highway was not pursued as an alternative because preliminary studies showed that there would be significant environmental impacts to cultural resources, rare and endangered species, and wetlands. Also, most homes and businesses along the highway would have to be removed. Because there would be no access control onto the conventional highway, vehicles would enter directly onto the highway from the multitude of driveways, which would slow traffic and increase the potential for accidents.

Response to Comment #3: Widening the existing highway would have a greater impact on the California tiger salamander population than Alternative A would (Alternative B, the preferred alternative, is not expected to affect the salamander). Widening would require cutting through the vernal pool next to the highway, destroying acres of breeding habitat. Also, the wider highway would cause increased mortality to salamanders attempting to cross the road to the breeding pool from the east side of the highway, effectively preventing migration from the eastern upland habitat.

Response to Comment #4: We have noted your objection to the acquisition of prime farmland between San Felipe Road and Hudner Lane. Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid paving over prime farmland due to its abundance in this area. Caltrans has reduced the median width to 46 feet, minimizing the width of roadside ditches and shortening some frontage roads to reduce the amount of acreage needed for Alternative 2 and Alternative B. The modified Alternative B, the preferred build alternative, would not require any acquisition from the parcel that you farm organically. Many years in the future, when an interchange is needed, a portion of

that parcel would be needed for that project (see the modified preferred route adoption alignment, Alternative 2).

Response to Comment #5: State Route 25 is designated as part of the California Freeway and Expressway system from south of Hollister to US 101. This means that widening the highway must be done as an expressway, unless this designation is officially changed. Although San Felipe Road has four lanes now south of its intersection with State Route 156, it does not meet the design standards required for an expressway. These standards include median width, minimum slopes, hydraulic features such as storage or conveyance ditches, utility requirements, intersection spacing, frontage road intersection standards with standard access control, and structural integrity for pavement design. The roadway would have to be widened further, causing right-of-way acquisition impacts along both sides of the road. Also, commuters and travelers will try to avoid roads that require out-of-direction travel and seek out the shortest routes. Rerouting State Route 25 north on San Felipe Road and west on State Route 156 to the intersection of the existing State Route 25 would impose 2 miles of out-of-direction travel for vehicles coming to and from Hollister on State Route 25, and add 2 miles to a trip between Gilroy and Hollister.

Response to Comment #6: Any alternative next to the San Benito River would involve significant impacts to endangered species, and probably waters and wetlands, as well as hundreds of acres of agricultural land. A large overhead structure would be required (at a cost of approximately \$10 million) to cross over the railroad tracks west of San Felipe Road. This alignment would also make the trip to Gilroy and points north longer, and it would not eliminate the need for the State Route 156 Improvement project.

Response to Comment #7: An alternative along the north edge of the hills that are southwest of State Route 25 would involve significant impacts to endangered species and hundreds of acres of agricultural land. This alignment would require two additional railroad overheads, adding \$20 million to the cost to the project.

Public Hearing Transcript

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PUBLIC HEARING
BEFORE CALTRANS,
THE COUNCIL OF SAN BENITO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS
AND THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
- - -
STATE ROUTE 25 WIDENING)
AND ROUTE ADOPTION PROJECT)Corrected Transcript
)July 13, 2010
)
)

ORIGINAL

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
HOLLISTER, CALIFORNIA
MAY 11, 2010

ATKINSON-BAKER, INC.
COURT REPORTERS
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FILE NO.: A403C3B

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BY: RICHARD ROSALES, PROJECT MANAGER
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BY: WENDY KRONMAN, ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION
2015 East Shields Avenue
Suite 100
Fresno, CA 93726

GEORGE RAJKOVICH
1448 Bolsa Road
Hollister, CA 95023

ROSALIND CORDA FOR THE MARY E. CORDA TRUST
231 Briggs Road
Hollister, CA 95023

RICK GAMBETTA
2533 Bolsa Road
Hollister, CA 95023

Appendix S Comments and Responses

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I N D E X

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC:	PAGE
GEORGE RAJKOVICH	5
ROSALIND CORDA FOR THE MARY E. CORDA TRUST	6
RICK GAMBETTA	6

EXHIBITS

LETTER/NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
	(NONE)	

Appendix S Comments and Responses

1 HOLLISTER, CALIFORNIA MAY 11, 2010 5:00 P.M.

2

3 MR. ROSALES: Can I get everybody's
4 attention, please? This meeting is now in session.

5 (Informal session of the Public Hearing
6 begins. Following are members' of the
7 public comments.)

8

9 MR. RAJKOVICH: George Rajkovich,
10 R-A-J-K-O-V-I-C-H, 1448 Bolsa Road, 25, Highway 25.

11 Briggs Road, where it's going to cross the
12 existing Highway 25 now, it cuts directly through our
13 ranch. I'd rather see it go down the property line and
14 turn on the end of the ranch, down for a connector road
15 instead of cutting the ranch on the 45 and leaving me
16 with -- I don't know what I'll have on one side of the
17 street, a little wedge, and the main part of the ranch
18 on the other side.

19 And the new expressway is cutting the back end of
20 the ranch. So we're getting it from both corners.

21 So that's what I wanted to say. The main thing
22 was the Briggs Road going over the hill for the
23 connector road. That's the one I'm concerned about.
24 I'd rather have it straightened out to the property
25 line, and then turn at the end, wherever they have to go

Page 5

1 from there. Okay?

2 All right. Thank you.

3
4 MS. CORDA: It's Mary E. Corda Trust,
5 C-O-R-D-A, 231 Briggs Road, B-R-I-G-G-S, Hollister.

6 And our objection is Alternative A, Plan A,
7 because it goes right through our property. So if they
8 can document that, that we do not appreciate that
9 because we have been -- that property has been in the
10 Corda family since 1906. I'm -- there are still members
11 that live there. Thank you.

12
13 MR. GAMBETTA: Rick Gambetta,
14 G-A-M-B-E-T-T-A, 2533 Bolsa Road, Hollister.

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15 Alternative 1 is a deal-breaker for me.
16 Alternative 2 is a better use of the two, which I'm not
17 in favor of either.

2

18 It will go right through, basically, my house,
19 right up to the front door. And it will be the fourth
20 time -- or the fifth time my family's been eminent
21 domained on the same piece of property, and personally,
22 I think that's more than one family should have to give
23 up, since 1920.

24 Flynn Road, Highway 25, are all on our property,
25 the airport. Eminent domain 34 acres, I believe, the

3

1 original highway took it out. This will be the fifth
2 time, but this cuts my property in half. Takes my house
3 or right up to my house. I don't know if it's even
4 livable if they cut a big cut bank, and then a freeway
5 down below it.

6 Couple things I'm concerned about. I'm
7 contemplating running for supervisor this next go round
8 and getting into government. Hollister wants to grow
9 their airport area as their golden nugget that we have
10 to offer, and the first option here would just basically
11 shoot that right in the foot, because you can't open the
12 egress to get there.

13 The other side, you still may have it, but you
14 won't be able to get in and out of the airport. You
15 have to go all the way around and loop in. They won't
16 be able to come off of that. Plus you'll cut right
17 through half of it. You wouldn't be able to get around
18 the airport, one side to the other. You just basically
19 shot that one in the foot. That will kill the future
20 development of the airport properties in that area.

21 But Alternative 2 will still leave that available
22 as an option down the road for the City of Hollister,
23 and I don't know if Caltrans cares or not, but I think
24 that the COG should care as their need to generate
25 resources for the county with the airport. We only have

1 one airport. It's not moving. We need to have enough
2 space around it so that we can facilitate what needs to
3 happen.

4

I just think that both of them are way too
5 costly. I don't know how you're going to fund it.

5

6 And the other thing is immediately when they make
7 a decision, whether it's Alternative A or B, they're
8 going to kill the values of whoever's property with the
9 stroke of a pen, because you're not going to be able to
10 sell it, without having options. And this may be 50
11 years out or 75 years out, and it's just going to --
12 immediately when you -- it may be done already by just
13 knowing that it could happen.

6

14 But if they actually say this is where it's going
15 to go in the future, we don't know when, you'd never be
16 able to -- I don't even know if you'd get anybody to
17 lend you money on the property in the future. So I
18 don't know if they have a back-up plan or a warranty
19 plan or some kind of a plan where you get reimbursed for
20 loss of use and loss of value.

21 That put me in consideration, because I'm heading
22 toward that time in my life where I want to retire, and
23 I'm living on my retirement income, which should be my
24 property. I should be able to sell it someday, and if
25 you pick my route, I won't be able do that. So I don't

Appendix S Comments and Responses

1 know where you go from there. Anyway, thanks for your
2 time.

3 MR. ROSALES: Can I get everybody's
4 attention, please? Thank you for coming. It's
5 8:00 p.m. The meeting is officially closed.

6 (The proceedings conclude at 8:00 p.m.)
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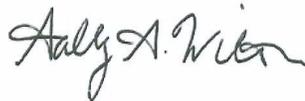
CERTIFICATE OF HEARING REPORTER

I, SALLY G. WILSON, duly authorized to administer oaths pursuant to Section 2093(b) of the California Code of Civil Procedure, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the proceeding was reported by me and was thereafter under my direction electronically transcribed; that the foregoing is a full, complete, and true record of said proceeding.

I further certify that I am not of counsel nor attorney for either side or any of the parties in the foregoing proceeding or in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

DATED: May 24, 2010

SALLY G. WILSON, CSR #11399



Response to Mr. Rajkovich

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Caltrans has taken into consideration your request to modify the preliminary design of the westward extension of Briggs Road proposed as part of Alternative B and Alternative 2. The Project Development Team decided to eliminate the Briggs Road extension from the Alternative B design, but retained this feature in Alternative 2, the corresponding route adoption alternative.

In the future, if local traffic becomes congested from increased commercial and industrial development in the area south of the airport, the Briggs Road extension would be built so that drivers would not have to go to Wright Road to get on the expressway. The preliminary design for this connector has been moved toward the northern edge of the parcel.

Response to Ms. Corda

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Caltrans has noted your objection to Alternative A, which would require acquisition and demolition of your family's homes and farm buildings. Alternative B has been chosen as the preferred alternative for construction.

Response to Mr. Gambetta

Thank you for your comments on the project. This document is no longer a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act no longer includes any construction—it now involves only a route adoption. As a courtesy, we responded to comments made under

NEPA and to comments about construction alternatives (assuming a hypothetical modified Alternative B). If and when there is a construction project, it would need to undergo a new and complete environmental analysis under state and federal law.

Response to Comment #1: Caltrans has noted your statement that you are against Alternative 1 [and Alternative A], and your mixed feelings about Alternative 2 [and Alternative B]. The preferred alternatives are the modified Alternative B for the build, and the modified Alternative 2 for the route adoption.

Response to Comment #2: Caltrans has noted that your family property has lost acreage several times due to past highway and local road improvements and that Alternative A would split your property and require acquisition of your home.

Response to Comment #3: Caltrans has noted your concern that Alternative A would prevent access to the Hollister Airport from the west, if in the future the city should decide to expand the airport development in that direction. We have also noted that you prefer Alternative B, in part because it would not affect the airport area. If Alternative A and/or Alternative 1 had been selected as the preferred alternatives, Caltrans would have coordinated with the airport and the Council of Governments so that the expressway would not preclude future airport development in this area nor future access routes. However, Alternative B and Alternative 2 are the preferred alternatives; there are no potential impacts on the airport from these alternatives.

Response to Comment #4: Your statement regarding the cost of the proposed alternatives and the uncertainty regarding funding is noted. The cost of the modified Alternative B is \$42,245,000, which is \$19,147,000 less than the previous design. The price of modified route adoption alternative, Alternative 2, is currently \$222,970,000, a savings of \$67,772,000.

Response to Comment #5: According to the Caltrans Right of Way division, if part or all of a property parcel is placed within a designated route adoption, the property value does not decline, but usually goes up over time. The zoning does not change due to the route adoption. Zoning is established and controlled by each county. A county can choose to limit types of development within a designated route adoption alignment; however, counties often allow changes and even construction of buildings within the alignment with the stipulation that eventually the property would be acquired for construction of the highway. Policies and practices vary by county.

Response to Comment #6: In the case of a build alternative, when a project is funded, approved, and scheduled for construction, Caltrans considers hardship cases on a case-by-case basis if a landowner needs to sell his or her property before right-of-way acquisitions for a project are scheduled.