

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: August 4-5, 2004

Reference No.: 2.2a.
Action Item

From: ROBERT L. GARCIA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Gary R. Winters
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Ref: **SUMMARY – NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT,
ROUTE 65 IN TULARE COUNTY – WIDEN TO FOUR LANES NEAR TERRA BELLA**

ISSUE:

The California Transportation Commission (Commission) is being asked to review and comment at the August 2004 Commission meeting on the following Notice of Preparation (NOP):

- 06-Tul-65, KP 0.0/29.0 (PM 0.0/18.0). The proposed project would widen Route 65 to a four-lane expressway near Terra Bella in Tulare County.

PROGRAMMING:

This project is not fully programmed in the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The project is currently programmed for Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funds of \$3,195,000 for right of way support and right of way capital in FY 2006-07. Construction capital and support will be programmed in a future STIP cycle. Total cost of the project is approximately \$59 million, with construction scheduled for FY 2009-10.

ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:

- Alternative 1 – Widen existing highway from two to four lanes with an 18.6 meter (61 foot) median.
- Alternative 2 – No-Build.

POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

- Noise impacts – Increase of noise levels by at least 12 decibels and/or approach/excess of the noise abatement criteria of 67 dBA (according to FHWA regulations (23 CFR 772) and Caltrans' Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction and Reconstruction Projects, October 1998) at four receptors in the project study area.
- Farmland – Impacts of 4.5 hectares (11 acres) of prime farmland and 65 hectares (160 acres) of Statewide and Locally Important Farmland (see National Environmental Policy Act,

Farmland Protection Policy Act (Title 7 United States Code 4201, et seq. and its regulations, Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations Chapter VI Part 658) and California Environmental Quality Act (Williamson Act farmland conversion)). Of these, 51.4 hectares (127 acres) would be Williamson Act farmland.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:

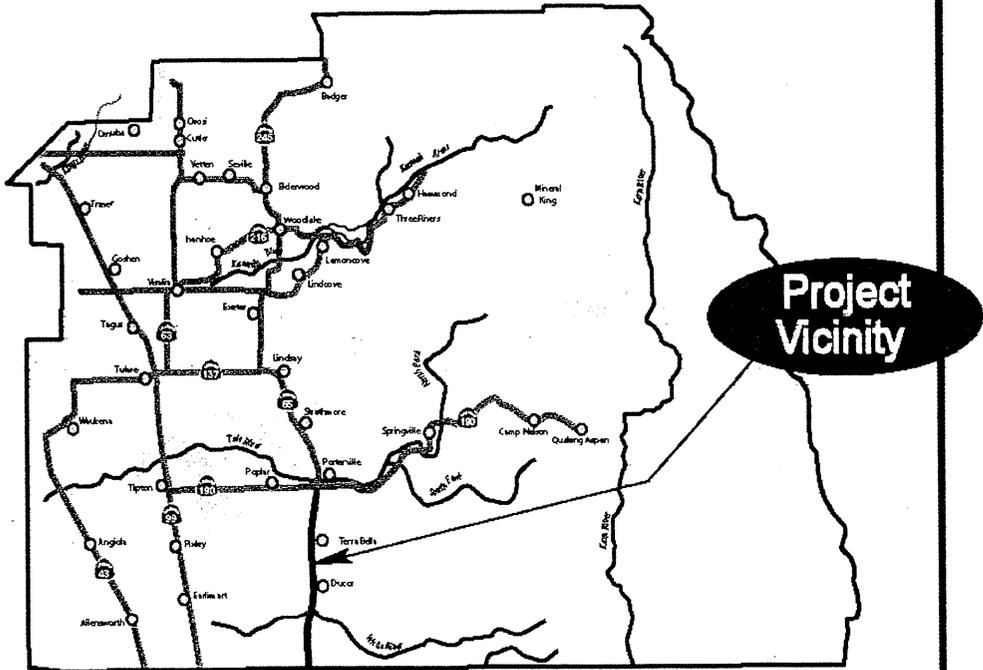
- Noise abatement in form of a sound wall at one location. Sound walls for the remaining three receptor locations were not feasible or reasonable.

Attachments

Project Vicinity Map

State Route 65

Terra Bella Expressway



Not to Scale

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: From: California Dept. of Transportation, District 6
Environmental Unit 179
2015 East Shields #100
Fresno, CA 93726-5308

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment**

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

Project Title: Terra Bella Expressway

Project Location: 06-TUL-65 KP 0.0/29.0 (PM 0.0/18.0)

Project Description: Widen State Route 65 from a two- to four-lane expressway with a standard median to relieve congestion and improve safety.

This is to inform you that the California Department of Transportation will be the lead agency in cooperation with the Federal Highways Administration and will prepare an environmental impact report/environmental assessment for the project described above. Your participation as a responsible agency is requested in the preparation and review of this document.

We need to know the applicable permit and environmental review requirements and the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR/EA prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

A more detailed project description, location map, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

A copy of the Initial Study (is) (is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please direct your response to and direct any comments or questions regarding this project to Vickie Traxler at phone number (559) 243-8294 at the address shown above. Please supply us with the name for a contact person in your agency.

Date April 22, 2004

Signature
Title

Vickie Traxler
VICKIE TRAXLER, Senior Environmental Planner
San Joaquin Valley Analysis Branch