

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: November 7-8, 2007

Reference No.: 2.3a.
Action Item

From: CINDY McKIM
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Timothy Craggs
Acting Chief
Division of Design

Subject: **ROUTE ADOPTION, 10-MER-152 PM 16.0/24.8**
RESOLUTION HRA 07-03

RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted for transmittal to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) are Highway Route Adoption Resolution HRA 07-03 and a route location map for State Highway Route (SR) 152. The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission approve the resolution and the route location map in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of the Los Banos Bypass route adoption of SR 152 in the county of Merced from Post Mile (PM) 16.0 to 24.8.

ISSUE:

The Department and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to modify the adopted route for SR 152 in Merced County and in the vicinity of the city of Los Banos. A Project Report was approved June 25, 2007. A Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and Section 4(f) Evaluation was prepared for California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Protection Act approval. This document was approved on June 25, 2007.

Recommended by: _____
RICHARD D. LAND
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND:

SR 152 is a major east-west route that begins at its junction with Highway 1 near Watsonville, in Santa Cruz County, and extends eastward through Gilroy, in Santa Clara County, and Los Banos, in Merced County, ending at State Route 99 near Fairmead, in Madera County. The route serves as a major east-west link between the major north-south routes of State Routes 99, 101 and Interstate 5. The route also serves as a truck route, commuter corridor, and a recreational corridor linking the Central Valley to the Bay Area and to the Central Coast.

SR 152 is included in the California Freeway/Expressway System. It is a High Emphasis and Focus Route in the Interregional Road System (IRRS). It is also included in the Terminal Access Route for the National Truck Network. The inclusion of the highway in the High Emphasis and Focus Route category highlights its critical importance to interregional travel and the State as a whole. The Focus Route assures rural connectivity for the northern portion of the state, as it connects the fast growing urbanized areas and urban centers to a freeway system. SR 152 is a critical interregional route serving the increased traffic demands created by high population growth in the Central Valley and strong employment demand in the Bay Area.

Within the limits of the proposed bypass, SR 152 experiences substantial volumes of interregional, recreational, and commuter traffic that mixes to create operational problems. Several traffic signals located within the limits delay motorists, and during peak travel periods, the ability to make left turns on and off the route is difficult. Traffic flow is slowed further by motorists turning into and out of driveways and local businesses, and by truck traffic from Central Valley farms that experience the stop and go conditions of SR 152 within the city of Los Banos.

The proposed route adoption for this segment of SR 152, to bypass the City of Los Banos, would reduce traffic congestion within the city and on SR 152, improve safety of SR 152, and improve interregional traffic by providing route continuity of SR 152 within Merced County. Expansion of the existing SR 152 through Los Banos to accommodate increasing traffic demands is not viable due to extensive commercial and business developments that exist on both sides of the highway.

Route studies to construct a bypass on SR 152 around the City of Los Banos were initiated in 1962. As a result of these studies, a southern bypass route was adopted by the California Highway Commission on April 28, 1965. Due to funding concerns, a portion of this adopted route (from Los Banos Creek to San Luis Canal) was rescinded in 1981. In 1987, as congestion and safety became a concern along SR 152, the bypass concept was reinitiated. In 1988, a Major Investment Study (MIS) was prepared by the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) with support from the County of Merced, City of Los Banos, the Department (D10), FHWA, and other agencies. Many alternatives were considered and rejected. In 1999, initial funding was obtained and environmental studies were initiated. Finally, on June 25, 2007, the environmental document was approved and the proposed northern bypass route alternative was selected. This alternative avoids wetlands, historic properties, the City's planned industrial park, and the proposed airport relocation site.

Portions of the freeway route adoption from April 28, 1965, will be rescinded as part of this proposed freeway route adoption as shown on the route location map.

Currently, SR 152 is a four-lane expressway from Interstate 5 to the city of Los Banos. As it enters the City's urbanized area, highway access is not limited or controlled. This segment is a four-lane conventional highway with left-turn lanes and two-way left-turn lanes that provide access to

commercial properties. The intersection of SR 152 and SR 165 currently exhibits substantial congestion during peak traffic periods. This intersection has a high percentage of truck turning movements in addition to normal north-south and east-west through truck traffic. SR 152 proceeds east of SR 165 for approximately one mile as a four-lane conventional highway before transitioning into a four-lane divided expressway.

The proposed project is to construct a four-lane freeway bypass within an ultimate six-lane right of way for SR 152 around and through the city of Los Banos. The freeway would begin approximately at Post Mile 16.0, east of Volta Road, and end approximately at Post Mile 24.8, east of the Old Santa Fe Grade Road. Three spread diamond type interchanges are proposed. The first interchange will be located just east of Ramos Road, the second interchange will be at the intersection of SR 152 with SR 165, and the third interchange will be located just west of Old Santa Fe Grade Road. Frontage roads would be constructed as needed to provide access to landlocked parcels.

Relinquishment of the existing SR 152 would occur after construction of the new bypass. Relinquishment would transfer the State's right of way, title, and interest of a section of SR 152 to the City of Los Banos and to Merced County.

There is considerable community interest and support to see this project completed. Several meetings were held to gather suggestions from the general public and local government staff. On April 7, 2005, a public hearing was held in Los Banos. All comments received were addressed in the final environmental document.

The current estimated cost for construction and right of way is approximately \$391 million. This project is programmed through the Plans, Specifications and Estimate phase in the current State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Funding for Right of Way (R/W) and Construction phases is proposed to come from a combination of Merced County's Regional Transportation Improvement Program and the Statewide Interregional Transportation Improvement Program. It is expected that the R/W phase would be funded in the 2008 STIP cycle and the construction phase would be funded in the 2010 STIP cycle. On March 4, 2003, MCAG approved the resolution affirming that the Los Banos Bypass is the number one transportation priority project for MCAG. MCAG and the City of Los Banos are pursuing alternate sources of funding, including contacting the U.S. Congress, through their representatives, for federally earmarked funds. If MCAG is able to get an approval for a Transportation Measure in the next three years, it is expected that some funds from this Transportation Measure would be used to fund R/W and Construction phases of this project.

The Department approved the Project Report on June 25, 2007. The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report was prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Final Environmental Impact Report for future consideration of funding is under agenda item 2.2c.(1).

Freeway Agreements will be developed and executed with the City of Los Banos and the County of Merced after Commission approval of this route adoption.

Attachments:

Resolution HRA 07-03

Vicinity Map

Location Map

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Highway Route Adoption Resolution
10-Mer-152 PM 16.0/24.8

Resolution HRA 07-03

WHEREAS, the California Department of Transportation (Department), with input on the project from the County of Merced and City of Los Banos has completed studies and approved of the public hearing process relative to the adopted State Highway Route 152, in Merced County; and

WHEREAS, the Department has completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and Section 4(f) Evaluation; and

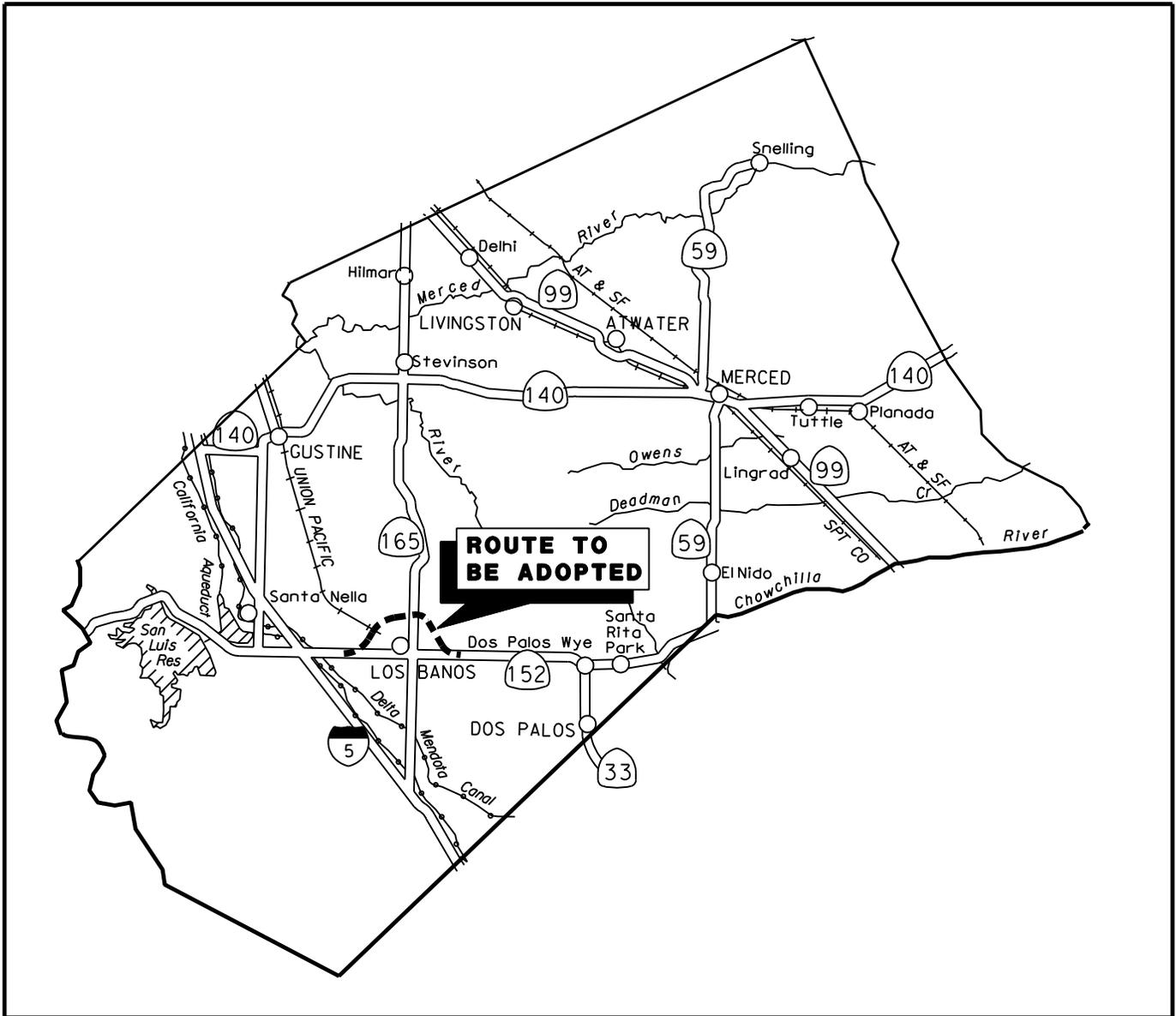
WHEREAS, the Alternative 3M was selected as the preferred alternative because it would have the least overall impact to the environment and best fulfilled the design aspects of the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the California Transportation Commission (Commission) that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby select, adopt, and determine the location of that segment of State Highway Route 152, from 0.4 miles east of Volta Road to 0.9 miles east of Old Santa Fe Grade, in Merced County, and officially designate it as 10-MER-152, a freeway, as said location is shown on the map submitted by Timothy Craggs, Acting Chief Design Engineer; and

BE IT RESOLVED by the Commission that the existing traversable highway shown on said map as the existing State highway shall remain as the State highway until such new portion is constructed and available for traffic and the existing State highway has been relinquished as provided by law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Commission has found and determined and hereby declares that such location of said State highway is for the best interest of the State.

VICINITY MAP



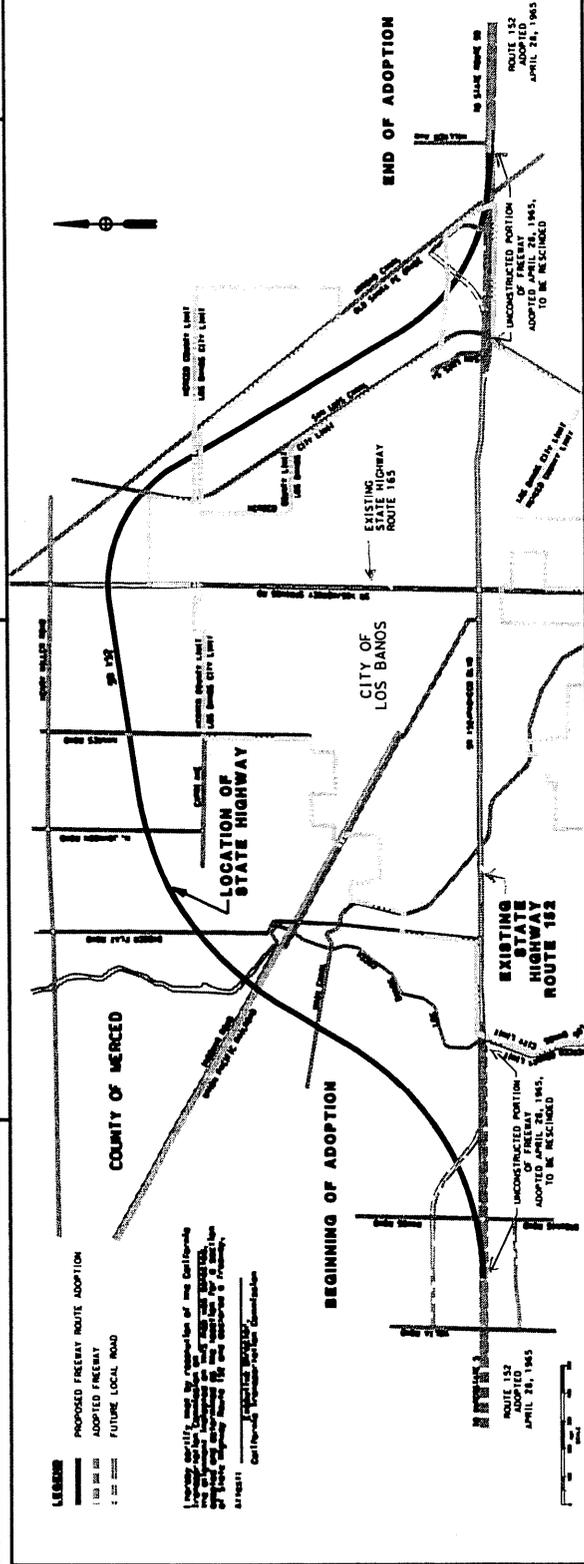
ROUTE ADOPTION LOS BANOS BYPASS 10-MER-152

LOCATION MAP

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DATE: 1965
 BY: STATE OF CALIFORNIA

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 MAP SHOWING
**LOCATION OF
 STATE HIGHWAY
 IN MERCED COUNTY**
 FROM 0.4 MI. EAST OF VOLTA ROAD
 TO 0.4 MI. WEST OF
 OLD SANTA FE BRIDGE
 10-MBR-182
 A FREEWAY



LEGEND

- 1 1/2" WIDE PROPOSED FREEWAY ROUTE ADOPTION
- 1" WIDE ADOPTED FREEWAY
- 2" WIDE FUTURE LOCAL ROAD

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DATE: 1965
 BY: STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ROUTE 152
 ADOPTED
 APRIL 28, 1965

UNCONSTRUCTED PORTION
 OF FREEWAY ADOPTED
 APRIL 28, 1965,
 TO BE RESUMED

EXISTING STATE
 HIGHWAY
 ROUTE 152

CITY OF
 LOS BANOS

LOCATION OF
 STATE HIGHWAY

COUNTY OF MERCED

END OF ADOPTION

UNCONSTRUCTED PORTION
 OF FREEWAY ADOPTED
 APRIL 28, 1965,
 TO BE RESUMED

ROUTE 155
 ADOPTED
 APRIL 28, 1965