

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: May 28-29, 2008

Reference No.: 2.3b.
Action Item

From: CINDY McKIM
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Helena Lenka Culik-Caro
Acting Chief
Division of Design

Subject: **NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 06-FRE-168 PM 10.1**
RESOLUTION S-736

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached Resolution S-736 and map authorizing a new public road connection at Nees Avenue to State Route (SR) 168 in the city of Clovis.

ISSUE:

The City of Clovis has requested approval of a new public road connection to SR 168. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of a new public road connection on the north side of SR 168 opposite of the existing Nees Avenue connection in the county of Fresno, city of Clovis, at Post Mile 10.1.

Recommended by: _____
RICHARD D. LAND
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND:

Due to current and projected growth in the northeast portion of the city of Clovis, the City is proposing to convert the existing Nees Avenue connection to SR 168 to a full four-way intersection to relieve local traffic congestion and support planned development and growth in the area.

SR 168 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System, the State Highway System, and the Scenic Highway System. It runs west to northeast traversing Fresno and Inyo Counties. SR 168 begins at Route 180 in Fresno, it proceeds northeast through Clovis and extends through rural areas into the Sierra National Forest to Huntington Lake. After a disconnect through the Sierras, SR 168 restarts again at Camp Sabrina in Inyo County continuing to Route 395 at Bishop and from Route 395 at Big Pine to Route 266 at Oasis near the California-Nevada state line.

On May 1, 1996, the California Transportation Commission adopted SR 168 as a freeway. On May 12, 1998, this segment of SR 168 in Clovis was denominated to a controlled access highway. A Controlled Access Highway Agreement (CAHA) with the County of Fresno was executed on this same date.

Within the project vicinity, SR 168 opened to traffic in 2001. Although the surroundings were rural at that time, the City of Clovis anticipated urban growth extending from central Clovis to Shepherd Avenue. This area was annexed by the City of Clovis in 2006. The local street system in this area was constructed primarily within the last two years.

This section of SR 168 is a four-lane expressway with 10-foot outside and 5-foot inside shoulders and an unpaved 85-foot median. Currently, Nees Avenue connects to SR 168 from the south only, via Tollhouse Frontage Road. The proposed project includes an extension of Nees Avenue from its intersection with SR 168 northward until it intersects with a small southward extension of DeWolf Avenue. The new connection to SR 168 will convert this intersection to a full four-way intersection.

A triangular area of approximately 350 acres, bounded by Shepherd Avenue on the north, SR 168 on the southeast, and DeWolf Avenue on the west is being developed for residential and commercial mixed uses. Most employment centers and shopping centers for this region are located south and west of this new area of development. Use of SR 168 to access these centers is limited to the Temperance Avenue interchange and the Shepherd Avenue intersection. These two access points are separated by over two and a half miles. Circuitous and lengthy routes must be used for those destinations which are not located in close proximity to these connections. This new connection will relieve local traffic congestion and provide an important transportation link between the expressway and the local road system, thus providing improved emergency and service vehicle access to surrounding residential and commercial areas north of SR 168.

Nees Avenue is identified in the Circulation Plan of the 1993 City of Clovis General Plan. Land uses in the vicinity of the proposed new connection include mostly residential development with planned future commercial development. Nees Avenue will function as part of the local circulation element providing access to the City of Clovis General Plan uses. The proposed connection will improve surface street operations by providing direct access from the newly developed areas to

SR 168. As the area builds out, this connection will also improve SR 168 mainline operations by relieving expected congestion at the nearby Shepherd intersection and Temperance interchange.

Traffic studies were performed for this project and indicated that SR168 would experience only minor impacts due to the new connection. In the 2025 baseline traffic condition, the proposed signalized intersection will operate at a level of service C or better according to the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) traffic study. Long term planning indicates an interchange might be needed in the year 2025.

The estimated construction cost for this project is \$730,000 and right of way cost is estimated at \$1,350,000. The project will be funded entirely by local funds.

There are no Advisory or Mandatory Design Exceptions. The new connection location meets Design Standards for interchange spacing for a future interchange.

The Department approved the Project Report prepared by the City of Clovis on March 14, 2008. An EIR for the Harlan Ranch Project and Northeast Annexation Program, which covered the location of the proposed connection, was certified on July 25, 2005. An addendum to the EIR for this project was prepared by the City of Clovis on October 3, 2007. The Clovis City Council adopted the EIR and addendum for this project on October 8, 2007. The EIR and addendum is on this month's agenda for Commission consideration.

On April 7, 2008, a CAHA, for the project location, was executed by the City of Clovis. This agreement will be finalized by the Department after Commission approval of the new connection.

On April 22, 2008, a CAHA was signed by Fresno County, and will be finalized by the Department after Commission approval of the new connection.

Attachments

Resolution S-736

Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection
6-Fre-168 PM 10.1**

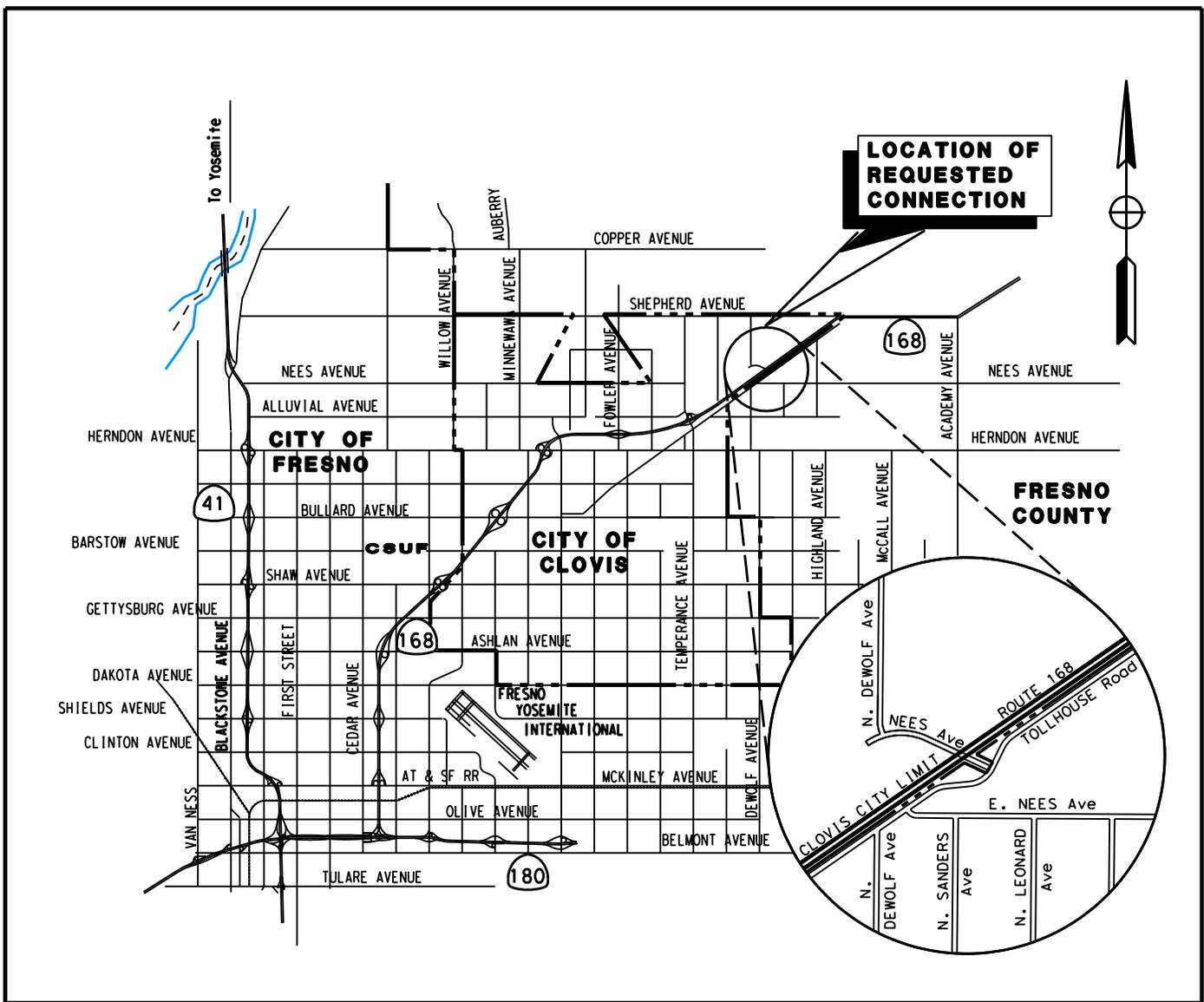
Resolution S-736

WHEREAS, the City of Clovis has requested approval of a new public road connection on State Route 168 for Nees Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Impact Report for the Harlan Ranch project and Northeast Annexation Program, which covered the location of the proposed connection, has been approved in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, the project will not have a significant impact on the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize one new public road connection on State Route 168 at Nees Avenue, PM 10.1, in the city of Clovis.



**NEW PUBLIC ROAD
CONNECTION
LOCATION MAP
06-FRE-168**