

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

Date: November 18, 2009

From: BIMLA G. RHINEHART
Executive Director

File: Book Item 2.2c (10)
Action

Ref: **Final Environmental Impact Report for the South Santa Fe Avenue North Improvements Project (Resolution E-09-99)**

ISSUE: Should the Commission, as a Responsible Agency, accept the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations for the South Santa Fe Avenue North Improvements Project (project) in San Diego County and approve the project for future consideration of funding?

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Commission accept the FEIR, Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations and approve the project for future consideration of funding.

BACKGROUND: The County of San Diego (County) is the CEQA lead agency for the project. The project consists of the reconstruction of a new centerline from a two lane to a four lane major roadway from Montgomery Avenue to 700 feet south of Woodland Avenue near the City of Vista. The project will widen South Santa Fe Avenue from a two lane roadway to a four lane major road, with a center left turn lane, bike lanes, and sidewalks. The project will enhance safety, increase capacity, reduce travel delay and provide an additional 1.78 lane miles.

On June 16, 2004, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors certified the FEIR in compliance with CEQA. On August 5, 2009, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for the County stated that "In July 2005, an Addendum to the EIR was completed for the purpose of discussing the revised Robelini Drive alignment and connection to Sycamore Avenue. An addendum to the EIR dated April 3, 2008 discussed the installation of a roadway drainage facility at Anna Lane. No new information of substantial importance has become available since the EIR was prepared. There have been no changes in the project or in the circumstances in which it is undertaken involving significant new environmental impacts not considered in the previously certified EIR and no new information of substantial importance has become available since said EIR was prepared. Consequently, no additional environmental review is required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162."

The County also approved findings and adopted overriding considerations for the project for significant impacts that cannot be reduced to less than significant levels after mitigation. Construction traffic, air quality, noise, water quality, hazardous materials, biology, and aesthetic impacts will occur from implementation of the project. All impacts can be mitigated to below a

level of significance except for impacts related to the occasional, temporary, nighttime, Sunday, and holiday construction noise; long term traffic noise for 12 residences, and cumulative long term traffic noise for eight residences. The County found that the unavoidable impacts are acceptable in light of the project's benefits.

The original project programming request identified the total project cost to be \$29,000,000. However, due to utility and railroad expenses that were not known during the application process, the project is now estimated to cost \$35,000,000. The increase in cost will be funded through local funding sources. The project is estimated to be funded with SLPP (\$1,000,000) and Local (\$ 34,000,000) funds. Construction is estimated to begin January 2010.

On October 16, 2009 the County provided confirmation that the scope of the project, as approved by the City Council, is consistent with the project programmed in the Proposition 1B SLPP program.

Attachments

- Resolution E-09-99
- Findings & Statement of Overriding Considerations
- Project Location

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Consideration of Funding 11-San Diego Resolution E-09-99

- 1.1 **WHEREAS**, the County of San Diego has completed a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:
 - South Santa Fe Avenue – North Reconstruction Project
- 1.2 **WHEREAS**, the County has certified that the Final Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
- 1.3 **WHEREAS**, the project will reconstruct a new centerline from a two lane to a four lane major roadway from Montgomery Avenue to 700 feet south of Woodland Avenue near the City of Vista. The project will enhance safety, increase capacity, reduce travel delay and provide an additional 1.78 lane miles; and
- 1.4 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a Responsible Agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.5 **WHEREAS**, written findings were made pursuant to CEQA guidelines to indicate that the project will result significant and unavoidable impacts due to construction noise; long term traffic noise for 12 residences, and cumulative long term traffic noise for eight residences that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level; and.
- 1.6 **WHEREAS**, a statement of overriding considerations was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors pursuant to CEQA guidelines that the benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts of the project; and
- 1.7 **WHEREAS**, the above significant effects are acceptable when balanced against the facts as set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.
- 2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby accept the findings and statement of overriding considerations and approve the above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.

**Findings Concerning Mitigation of Significant Environmental Effects
South Santa Fe Avenue Reconstruction Project
San Diego, California**

State Clearinghouse Number 1999061053

June 16, 2004

The Board of Supervisors for the County of San Diego has reviewed and considered the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the South Santa Fe Avenue Reconstruction Project. Pursuant to §21081 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the following findings are made for each significant effect identified in the Final EIR, including the Errata Sheet, for the proposed project.

1. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

Significant Effect: Construction traffic generated by the proposed project would result in potentially significant traffic disruption and possible circulation hazards. During construction, the temporary maneuvering of construction crews and increased truck trips would potentially interfere with local traffic and circulation.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: The following mitigation measures were identified in the EIR to reduce the temporary impacts to traffic circulation and pedestrian and bicycle facilities during construction.

- A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) shall be developed that focuses on informing the motoring public and affected parties of construction dates and activities. The TMP for the proposed project shall include project signing posted in advance of construction work zone areas. The advance signage shall identify dates and times of the construction and possible travel delays. Signage shall also be provided for directions to businesses in construction areas. The project construction schedules shall be posted in local and regional newspapers. Any recommended detour routes shall also be included in these notices. Construction and detour information shall be posted on the County web pages.
- The TMP developed for this project and traffic control plans shall be coordinated with the public information campaign and the transportation demand management elements.

- Coordination with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol, and other highway agencies, as well as emergency units, utilities, California State University (CSU) San Marcos, and railroads, shall be conducted to receive input and support for advising motorists of traffic delay situations. Construction operations shall be conducted as determined necessary through interagency coordination efforts.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid the construction traffic impacts. The No Project Alternative would not cause any traffic related impacts because there is no construction required as no roadway improvements would occur. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

2. AIR QUALITY

Significant Effect: The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to air quality. These short-term impacts would occur as a result of increased fugitive dust and diesel engine exhaust particulates during construction.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rational: Mitigation of potentially significant air quality impacts during construction activities can be achieved through the following measures that minimize the emission of fugitive dust, including PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} and diesel particulate exhaust emissions. These measures shall be applied to all active construction areas, including staging areas.

Site Preparation and Demolition

1. Locate construction equipment and truck staging and maintenance areas as far as feasible from and downwind of schools, active recreation areas, and other areas of high population density
2. Minimize land disturbance
3. Use watering trucks to minimize dust; water with frequency adequate to prevent dust plumes off the project site
4. Cover trucks when hauling dirt
5. Stabilize the surface of dirt piles if not removed immediately
6. Limit vehicular paths in unpaved areas
7. Sweep paved streets at least once per day where there is evidence of dirt that has been carried onto the roadway

Construction

1. Cover trucks when transferring materials
2. Use dust suppressants on traveled paths that are not paved

3. Minimize unnecessary vehicular and machinery activities
4. Sweep paved streets at least once per day where there is evidence of dirt that has been carried onto the roadway

Post-construction

1. Revegetate any undeveloped land disturbed by construction
2. Remove unused material
3. Remove dirt piles

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid air quality impacts associated with construction. The No Project Alternative would not generate construction related air quality impacts because construction is not required, as roadway improvements would not occur. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

3. NOISE

Significant Effect: The proposed project would create significant, long-term, traffic noise impacts at the following sensitive receptors as identified in the EIR: 26, 27, 28, on the east side of South Santa Fe Avenue, north of Palmyra; and 32, 33, 34A on the west side of South Santa Fe Avenue, on either side of Palmyra. More detail on the location of these impacts is provided in Subchapter 2.3 of the Final EIR and the Noise Impact Analysis, Appendix C to the Final EIR. These long-term noise effects of the proposed project are direct and are considered significant impacts.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation of significant noise impacts at these receptors can be achieved through the construction of noise walls that would reduce noise impacts at the identified receptors to less than significant levels. The County shall construct the following noise walls to mitigate noise impacts. The locations of these noise walls are illustrated in Figure 1, Sheet 7 of the Noise Impact Analysis, Appendix C to the Final EIR.

- A noise wall will be constructed along the ROW on South Santa Fe Avenue in front of Receptors 26, 27, and 28. This wall will vary from 6 to 7 feet in height and will be approximately 225 feet long. The southern portion of this wall will be an extension of a proposed retaining wall.
- A noise wall will be constructed along the ROW on South Santa Fe Avenue in front of Receptor 32. This wall will be approximately 97 feet long and will be placed on top of a proposed retaining wall. The height of the noise wall, excluding the retaining wall, will be 6 feet.
- A 6-foot-high noise wall will be constructed along the ROW on South Santa Fe Avenue in front of Receptors 33 and 34A. The wall will be approximately 97 feet long.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative would result in reduced significant noise impacts. The No Project Alternative would result in lower traffic noise levels due to reduced speeds as compared with the proposed project. Noise level increases and traffic noise impacts forecast for the proposed project would not result with implementation of the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

Significant Effect: The proposed project would create significant, long-term, traffic noise impacts at the following sensitive receptors as identified in the EIR: 2A, 16, 17, 18, on the east side of South Santa Fe Avenue; 19A on Robelini Drive; and 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59 in the Abelia Lane neighborhood. More detail on the location of these impacts is provided in Subchapter 2.3 of the Final EIR and the Noise Impact Analysis, Appendix C to the Final EIR. These long-term noise effects of the proposed project are direct and are considered significant impacts.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(3), specific economic, social, or other considerations make infeasible the mitigation measure or project alternative identified in the EIR. The infeasible mitigation consists of construction of noise walls to reduce noise impacts at the identified sensitive receptors.

Rationale: Mitigation measures are not considered feasible for the identified sensitive receptors. The construction of a noise wall at receptor 2A (second story residence) would be detrimental to the commercial business on the first floor of the building because it would block the passing motorists' view of the businesses.

At receptors 16, 17, and 18, a noise wall could be constructed. However, a noise wall built along the road right-of-way to block traffic noise could potentially reflect existing and future noise from trains, because railroad tracks are located between the homes and the roadway. Furthermore, the noise wall would restrict visibility for train operators and pedestrians, resulting in potential safety hazards.

In addition, the possibility of a private property noise wall was considered in this location. This noise wall would affect the backyards of approximately 7 mobile homes and construction of the wall would require the removal of improvements in the rear of the homes. This would potentially require the relocation of some mobile homes and the removal of some room additions or patio covers. For these reasons a noise wall at this location is not considered feasible.

A noise wall at receptor 19A would not significantly reduce noise (i.e., a 3 dBA reduction). Therefore a noise wall is not considered feasible.

A noise wall at receptors 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59 would reduce impacts to these receptors; however, the wall would be 8 feet high and 700 feet long along the right-of-way on Sycamore Avenue. This wall is not considered feasible because the required size

and length would negatively affect the viewshed of people using the road and would not fit in with community character in the area. However, the construction of noise walls is feasible inside the yards of these homes because the location of the homes are far enough away from the edge of the properties to allow construction of the walls. Therefore, the County will contact the property owners and offer to construct individual private property noise walls if the owners agree to assume all future responsibility for maintenance. Because this measure does not require that property owners accept the offered noise walls, impacts at these receptors could continue to be significant and remain unmitigable.

Project Alternatives: Both the No Project Alternative and the No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would result in reduced significant noise impacts. The No Project Alternative would result in lower traffic noise levels due to reduced speeds as compared with the proposed project. Noise level increases and traffic noise impacts forecast for the proposed project would not result with implementation of the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would not include the Sycamore Avenue Extension that is incorporated in the proposed project. This would eliminate the significant noise impacts to receptors 19A, 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59. The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would increase noise levels at receptors 50 through 56A, as compared to the proposed project. These noise impacts would not be significant. This alternative does not accomplish the goals of improving the transportation network by realigning South Santa Fe Avenue with Sycamore Avenue/Buena Creek Road to form a four-leg intersection, nor would it improve drainage conditions to accommodate 100-year flows and reduce flooding in the area adjacent to Buena Creek.

Significant Effect: Construction-period noise impacts related to nighttime, Sunday, or holiday work, staging and stockpiling, and traffic control devices could result in potentially significant noise impacts. Daytime impacts resulting from construction staging, stockpiling, and traffic control devices would be mitigated to below a level of significance. Depending on the location of nighttime construction, it may not be possible to mitigate noise impacts to a less-than-significant level. If nighttime construction were necessary, potential noise impacts would be considered significant and unavoidable.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(3), specific economic, social, or other considerations make infeasible the mitigation measure or project alternative identified in the EIR. The infeasible mitigation measure consists of limiting construction to the hours established in the County Noise Ordinance.

Rationale: The project could allow construction during times when traffic is lighter than during morning and afternoon peak hours, including nighttime, Sundays, and holidays. The intent of scheduling construction during these hours is to minimize traffic delays along South Santa Fe Avenue and adjacent roadways that would be more likely during daytime hours when traffic is heavier. This increase in daily work hours would also provide for a reduction in the overall length of time that adjacent properties and travelers are inconvenienced by the construction activities.

The following measures would be implemented to reduce potential construction related noise impacts. These measures would reduce impacts related to construction staging, stockpiling, and traffic control devices to less than significant.

- Noise walls will be constructed as the first order of work where topography allows and there are no engineering constraints.
- Residents and business owners will be notified in advance of planned work near their properties.
- Contractors will be required to have and maintain mufflers of original equipment grade or better on all engines. This will also apply to subcontractors with haul trucks.
- Traffic control devices (such as lighted signs) located within 500 feet of residences will be solar or battery powered; no internal combustion engines should be used for these devices.
- The location and layout of staging areas, and the conduct of operations within the staging areas will be controlled to prevent construction noise occurring Monday through Saturday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., measured at or within any developed and used residential property, in excess of 75 dB(A) for a period of 8 hours.

Occasional nighttime, Sunday, and holiday construction may be required to avoid excessive traffic congestion that could result from daily job commute, school buses, and parents dropping off their children at day care or school. An increase in traffic at major intersections and along major Circulation Roads, such as South Santa Fe Avenue, could potentially affect public safety by lengthening emergency response times by police, fire department, and medical services.

Although the proposed project would potentially create a significant, unmitigated noise impact during nighttime, Sunday, or holiday hours, the following mitigation is proposed to reduce impacts to sensitive receptors, albeit not to below a level of significance

In addition to the above measures, the contractor shall be required to take extra measures to minimize the noise impact on nearby residences. These measures should include the following elements. Many or all of these elements would be likely to become part of the conditions of the variance approved for the work.

- Where excessive noise levels are likely to occur, temporary abatement measures shall be planned to reduce noise to acceptable levels. The contractor shall execute work tasks to avoid noise impacts.
- Machinery shall be selected with noise control in mind. Noise levels often vary widely between manufacturers and models for similar types of equipment. Some machines are specifically designed for low noise emissions. All equipment shall be inspected to ensure good working order. “Hospital grade” mufflers shall be considered.

- Where work will be near residences at night or on Sundays, equipment shall be equipped with either ambient-sensitive or manually adjustable backup alarms that will be less noisy than standard alarms but still produce a noise greater than ambient as required for safety reasons.
- Placement of equipment shall be carefully considered. Orienting a truck such that its exhaust points away from a receptor can result in as much as 10 dB of noise reduction. Other equipment shall be shielded behind natural or human-made barriers as possible, or placed as far as possible from sensitive receptors.
- During construction, temporary noise barriers shall be constructed where topography allows and there are no engineering constraints. Commercial scaffold-mounted curtains are available that are specifically designed for construction noise mitigation. Stacked bales of hay have also been successfully used as inexpensive barriers.
- If nighttime work is required, the contractor shall notify affected residents at least 1 week in advance of commencing such work.
- If nighttime work is required, it shall be limited to no more than 3 consecutive nights in any 1 week.

No other feasible mitigation measures are available for construction during the nighttime hours.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid the construction noise impacts. The No Project Alternative would not cause any construction-related noise impacts because there is no construction required as no roadway improvements would occur. The other alternatives would require construction and could potentially require construction during nighttime hours, holidays, or on Sunday. The No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

Significant Effect: The project would contribute to significant cumulative noise impacts at receptors 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, and 34A. Noise that would result from the implementation of the proposed project, in addition to the noise that would exist in future build out conditions, would combine to result in a potentially significant impact to the identified receptors. More detail on the location of these impacts is provided in Subchapter 2.3 of the Final EIR and the Noise Impact Analysis, Appendix C to the Final EIR.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation of cumulative noise impacts to the identified receptors can be achieved through the construction of noise walls as detailed in the Noise Impact Analysis, Appendix C to the Final EIR. The noise walls would reduce noise from the proposed project as well as noise generated by other nearby noise sources in the buildout conditions. This mitigation would require the construction of the noise walls detailed

above which include a noise wall in the right-of-way in front of receptors 26, 27, and 28; receptor 32; and receptors 33 and 34A.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid cumulative noise impacts at the identified receptors. No roadway improvements would occur under the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

Significant Effect: The project would contribute to significant cumulative noise impacts at receptors 19A, 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59. Noise that would result from implementation of the proposed project, in addition to the noise that would exist in future build out conditions, would combine to result in a potentially significant impact to these identified receptors. More detail on the location of these impacts is provided in Subchapter 2.3 of the EIR.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(3), specific economic, social, or other considerations make infeasible the mitigation measure or project alternative identified in the EIR. The infeasible mitigation consists of construction of noise walls to reduce noise impacts at the identified sensitive receptors.

Rationale: Mitigation measures are not considered feasible for the identified noise receptors. As detailed above and in Subchapter 2.3 of the Final EIR, sound walls at receptor 2A, 16, 17, 18, 19A, 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59 are not considered to be feasible for various reasons and would not be constructed as mitigation for the proposed project. Cumulative noise impacts at these receptors would remain significant and not mitigated.

Project Alternatives: Both the No Project Alternative and the No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would result in reduced significant cumulative noise impacts. The No Project Alternative would result in lower traffic noise levels due to reduced speeds as compared with the proposed project. Cumulative noise level increases and traffic noise impacts forecast for the proposed project would not result in significant impacts with implementation of the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would eliminate the significant cumulative noise impacts to receptors 19A, 20, 21, 22A, 23, 57A, 58, and 59. This alternative would not construct the Sycamore Avenue extension as proposed in the proposed project and noise impacts at the identified receptors would not occur in the near-term or cumulatively. This alternative does not accomplish the goals of improving the transportation network by realigning South Santa Fe Avenue with Sycamore Avenue/Buena Creek Road to form a four-leg intersection, nor would it improve drainage conditions to accommodate 100-year flows and reduce flooding in the area adjacent to Buena Creek.

Significant Effect: The project could contribute to cumulative construction-related noise impacts. Other construction projects may occur concurrently with the proposed South Santa Fe Avenue project. Simultaneous construction activities could result in cumulative construction-related impacts that would be considered significant.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation of potentially significant cumulative construction-related noise impacts can be achieved through the coordination of the proposed project construction with other construction projects in the area.

Mitigation states that prior to the start of the project, the County will ascertain the schedules of other major construction projects in the area including, but not limited to the Buena Creek Rail Station and the NCTD Commuter Rail Service (the “Sprinter”). Work will be scheduled to avoid more than one project using diesel engine construction equipment, pavement breakers, or similar noisy equipment, simultaneously within 500 feet of a residence.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid potential cumulative construction-noise impacts. No roadway improvements would occur under the No Project Alternative; therefore, no construction would take place. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

4. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Significant Effect: Construction of the proposed project would result in the potential runoff of sediment and other pollutants that could affect Agua Hedionda Creek and Buena Creek. This is considered a potentially significant water quality impact. Construction of the proposed project would involve demolition of the existing roadbed, soil disturbance to establish the new road grade, excavation for cut slopes, and the exposure of bare soil. These construction activities could result in runoff of sediment and other pollutants.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21081(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: The following mitigation measures were identified in the EIR that will reduce potentially significant construction-related water quality impacts to less than significant.

1. The County shall develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that describes best management practices (BMPs) that would be employed before, during, and after construction to minimize erosion and runoff from construction

activities. The SWPPP shall be submitted by the County to the Regional Water Quality Control Board as part of a package to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Construction Storm Water Permit for storm water discharges during general construction activity. Specific BMPs that shall be required for the SWPPP include:

- Site Design BMPs: Technology-based pollution prevention controls to meet the maximum extent practicable (MEP) requirements for designing and maintaining facilities
 - Maintenance BMPs: BMPs applicable to all maintenance operations (i.e., litter pickup, street sweeping, etc.)
 - Design Pollution Prevention BMPs: BMPs applicable to the design of new facilities or major renovations of existing facilities (e.g., permanent soil stabilization, ditch channel lining systems, etc.)
 - Construction BMPs: Controls to meet best available technology/best control technology requirements for construction projects
 - Structural BMPs: Treatment BMPs to meet MEP requirements
2. Construction BMPs shall be specified by the County on project plans and specifications and implemented at all construction areas and staging areas. BMPs shall be implemented to avoid potential contamination of the surface water quality in Buena Creek and Agua Hedionda Creek from spills or leaks of vehicle fuels and lubricants or other noxious chemicals. BMPs shall be implemented for the handling of hazardous materials to prevent spills. Construction staging and storage areas shall be provided away from Buena Creek and Agua Hedionda Creek and shall be shown on project plans. Measures to avoid runoff from each staging and storage area shall be specified on project plans. Petroleum products, concrete, asphalt or other coating materials, and other materials shall be prevented from entering surface waters.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative is the only alternative that would avoid the construction-related water quality impacts. The No Project Alternative would not cause any construction-related water quality impacts because there is no construction required as no roadway improvements would occur with this alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

Significant Effect: The proposed project could potentially create significant water quality impacts to downstream channel stability after the construction of the drainage components. The project would have an effect on downstream channel stability through changes in the rate and volume of runoff; the sediment load due to changes in the land surface; and other hydraulic changes from stream encroachments, crossings, or realignment.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: The following mitigation measures were identified in the EIR to reduce the temporary impacts to water quality impacts related to downstream channel stability.

Elements of the above-mentioned SWPPP would address long-term water quality impacts that could occur after construction of the proposed project. The following measure would also be incorporated. Permanent BMPs shall be incorporated into project plans and specifications to reduce street drainage and storm water runoff velocities before entering, and within, Buena Creek, Agua Hedionda Creek, and other tributary drainages adjacent to the reconstructed roadways. This shall include BMPs or other comparable storm water controls and filtering systems.

Project Alternatives: Only the No Project Alternative would reduce potential water quality impacts to a level less than the proposed project. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

5. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Significant Effect: The public and construction workers could be exposed to increased health risks which are considered a potentially significant impact. Exposure to health risks could result from the release of hazardous material from the disruption of existing contamination during construction of the proposed project.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: The following mitigation measures were identified in the EIR to reduce the potentially significant health risk that could result from exposure to existing hazardous material if the project were to be implemented.

The County of San Diego will be responsible for the remediation of hazardous substances or wastes encountered during right-of-way acquisition and construction.

1. A Business Closure Plan will be developed for the businesses that have the potential for contamination from hazardous materials and/or petroleum products. The Business Closure Plan provides a method by which businesses that involve potentially hazardous materials may be moved or closed in compliance with County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) regulations.
2. Additional work during the ROW acquisition process will be conducted by the County under the supervision of the DEH, Site Assessment and Mitigation Division to assess

the need for additional evaluation of specific sites within the project vicinity. The additional investigation would clarify the extent of potential contamination and the level of any remediation required. Mitigation work plans, if required, will be developed in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.

3. A worker health and safety plan and a public health and safety plan will be prepared to address construction-related health and safety impacts in areas of known or suspected contamination. These plans will be prepared in accordance with all applicable regulatory requirements. Appropriate controls as provided in San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Rule 361.145 will be instituted during demolition and removal of the asbestos-containing materials.
4. During construction and excavation, should any stained soil, unknown materials, or pungent odors be encountered, construction activities will cease and the County of San Diego Department of Health Services will be notified immediately.

Project Alternatives: Both the No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative and the Alternate Railroad Crossing Alternative would result in reduced significant hazardous material impacts. The potential for the No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative to release or disrupt known potential sources of hazardous material contamination is less than the proposed project because there would be no ROW acquisition or construction associated with the Sycamore Avenue extension. Similarly, the Alternate Railroad Crossing Alternative would require less ROW acquisition and construction than the proposed project and would have less potential for hazardous material impacts.

With the No Project Alternative, there would be no construction, so there would not be the potential to disrupt existing hazardous material contamination sites. However, any hazardous materials affected by the proposed project would be remediated. Thus, the potential benefit of remediation would not occur with the No Project Alternative.

6. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Significant Effect: Implementation of the proposed project will result in permanent impacts to 8.30 acres of nonnative grasslands. Permanent impacts to nonnative grasslands would be considered significant direct impacts of the proposed project. Nonnative grasslands are considered sensitive by the County because they provide important foraging habitat for raptors and may support other sensitive wildlife and plant species.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation of 8.30 acres of nonnative grassland will be mitigated at a ratio of 0.5:1 for a total of 4.15 acres in accordance with County policy. Mitigation would be fulfilled either by the purchase of credits within an approved mitigation bank or the purchase of suitable habitat and its placement within a dedicated open space easement.

Project Alternatives: All three project alternatives would reduce the impacts to nonnative grasslands. The No Project Alternative would reduce impacts to nonnative grasslands because there would be no construction or realignment of the road that would disrupt nonnative grasslands. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would result in less biological impacts because the Sycamore Avenue extension would not be built and this area would not be disturbed, including the Buena Creek drainage area. Compared to the proposed project this alternative would result in 0.916 acre less impact to nonnative grassland. However, this alternative does not accomplish the goals of improving the transportation network by realigning South Santa Fe Avenue with Sycamore Avenue/Buena Creek Road to form a four-leg intersection, nor would it improve drainage conditions to accommodate 100-year flows and reduce flooding in the area adjacent to Buena Creek.

The Alternate Railroad Crossing Component Alternative would result in less significant impacts to nonnative grasslands than the proposed project. This alternative would impact 1.11 acres less nonnative grassland than the proposed project. However, the railroad crossing component in this alternative would not combine the railroad crossing with the four-leg intersection at South Santa Fe Avenue/York Drive/Woodland Drive. In addition, the operational efficiency of the intersection would be affected because of the potential conflict between the traffic signal at the intersection and the railroad crossing.

Significant Effect: The proposed project will result in significant direct impacts to wetland and riparian habitats, including those areas under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Game. Significant impacts to wetland and riparian habitats include impacts to the following communities: southern willow scrub, southern sycamore willow woodland, mulefat scrub, arundo scrub, and disturbed wetlands. These impacts to wetland and riparian habitat types as a result of the proposed project are shown below in Table 1 and Table 2 shows jurisdictional wetland impacts for the proposed project.

**Table 1
Impacts to Wetland and Riparian Habitats within the
South Santa Fe Avenue Reconstruction Project Area (in acres)**

Impact	Southern Sycamore Willow Woodland	Mulefat Scrub	Arundo Scrub	Southern Willow Scrub	Disturbed Southern Willow Scrub	Disturbed Wetlands	Unvegetated Streambed	TOTAL
Permanent	0.28	0.03	0.52	0.24	0.30	0.18	0.19	1.74
Temporary	0	0	0	0.27	0	0	0.06	0.33
TOTAL	0.28	0.03	0.52	0.51	0.30	0.18	0.25	2.07

Table 2

Permanent and Temporary Impacts to Jurisdictional Waters (in acres)

Impacts	Buena Creek Drainage	Agua Hedionda Creek	TOTAL
Impacts to ACOE Jurisdictional Waters¹			
Permanent	0.37	0.05	0.42
Temporary	0.07	0.003	0.07
TOTAL	0.44	0.053	0.49
Impacts to CDFG Jurisdictional Streambed¹			
Permanent	1.55	0.19	1.74
Temporary	0.30	0.03	0.33
TOTAL	1.85	0.22	2.07

¹ All measurements in acres. The jurisdictions of the ACOE and CDFG overlap.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation for impacts to southern willow scrub, disturbed southern willow scrub, southern sycamore willow woodland, mulefat scrub, arundo scrub, and disturbed wetlands will be provided to achieve, at a minimum, no net loss of wetlands through habitat creation or restoration, for Buena Creek and Agua Hedionda Creek. County guidelines state that all wetland impacts should be mitigated at a 3:1 ratio. This guideline includes a component of 1:1 creation and 2:1 restoration/enhancement. The mitigation ratios that will be implemented for the proposed project are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3
Mitigation Requirements for Impacts to
Wetland and Riparian Habitats (in acres)**

Vegetation Communities/Habitat Type	Mitigation Ratio	Impact	Mitigation
Southern Sycamore Willow Woodland	3:1	0.28	0.84
Mulefat Scrub	3:1	0.03	0.09
Arundo Scrub ^{1,2}	3:1	0.52	1.56
Southern Willow Scrub	3:1	0.24	0.72
Disturbed Southern Willow Scrub	3:1	0.30	0.90
Disturbed Wetlands ^{1,2}	3:1	0.18	0.54
Unvegetated streambed	3:1	0.19	0.57
TOTAL	-	1.74	5.22

In addition, the provided mitigation shall address the regulatory requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and California Department of Fish and Game, pursuant to the Wetland Delineation and Impact Analysis Report (EDAW 2002). Compensatory mitigation ratios must be reviewed and approved by the resource agencies before being considered final. Compensatory mitigation for permanent and temporary impacts to wetlands may be accomplished by a combination of mitigation strategies that includes restoration, creation, enhancement, and/or preservation.

Project Alternatives: Both the No Project Alternative and the No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would reduce the impacts to riparian and wetland habitats resulting from the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would reduce impacts to nonnative grasslands because there would be no construction or realignment of the road that would disrupt nonnative grasslands. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would result in less wetland and riparian habitat impacts because the Sycamore Avenue extension would not be built and the Buena Creek drainage area would not be improved. Impacts to the following wetland and riparian habitat types would be reduced: southern willow scrub (-0.38 acre), southern sycamore willow woodland (-0.008 acre), mulefat scrub (-0.01 acre), and arundo scrub (-0.33 acre). However, this alternative does not accomplish the goals of improving the transportation network by realigning South Santa Fe Avenue with Sycamore Avenue/Buena Creek Road to form a four-leg intersection, nor would it improve drainage conditions to accommodate 100-year flows and reduce flooding in the area adjacent to Buena Creek.

Significant Effect: The proposed project would potentially result in indirect short-term impacts to biological resources. Potential sources for indirect impacts to the vegetation communities and plant species known to occur adjacent to the project area include trampling of vegetation outside of the limits of grading by workers and vehicles during construction, erosion into off-site areas, and impacts.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Potential indirect short-term impacts during construction of the proposed project can be mitigated through resource protection measures.

The following resource protection measures shall be implemented by the County to ensure that impacts to sensitive resources do not occur beyond those anticipated in this environmental analysis.

1. Prior to commencement of construction, the limits of each phase of project construction shall be clearly delineated by a survey crew. The limits shall be checked by the biological monitor before initiation of clearing or construction. The project

biologist shall submit a letter to the County indicating that the limits of construction have been checked and work can commence.

2. Activities, including staging areas, equipment access, and disposal or temporary placement of excess fill, shall be prohibited within drainages outside of the identified project area.
3. Erosion and siltation into off-site areas during construction will be minimized. The contractor shall prepare an erosion control plan for approval by the County. The contract supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the erosion control plan is developed and implemented.
4. Construction access shall utilize existing developed areas or be within the ROW of proposed road and drainage improvements. If new or temporary access routes not within the project identified in this EIR are determined to be necessary, these areas shall be surveyed for biological resources prior to their use. Contractors shall clearly mark all access routes (i.e., flagged and/or staked) prior to the onset of construction.
5. Storage of soil or fill material from the project site shall be in developed areas. Contractors shall delineate stockpile areas on the grading plans for review by the County.
6. To avoid sensitive habitats, construction staging areas, equipment refueling areas, and other areas for equipment and materials storage shall be located on existing developed properties. To avoid inadvertent impacts to sensitive biological resources that may be present, storage and access areas shall be displayed on the approved project plans and specifications.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative would reduce the potential for short-term indirect impacts to biological resources that would result from the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would eliminate the potential for short-term indirect impacts to biological resources because there would be no construction or realignment of the road that could result in impacts. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

Significant Effect: Potential direct impacts to sensitive bird species (federal species of concern and/or California Special Concern species) could occur from the proposed project. Sensitive species (federal species of concern and/or California Special Concern species) found within the project area during the focused surveys include Costa's hummingbird, olive-sided flycatcher, Pacific-slope flycatcher, yellow warbler, hermit warbler, and yellow-breasted chat. These species could be impacted by the proposed project through loss of foraging and potential nesting habitat.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Impacts to these sensitive bird species can be mitigated through provision of habitat-based mitigation, as required under the previously discussed significant biological

effects. In addition, brush removal shall not occur during the breeding season (March 15 to September 15).

No raptor nests were observed within the project area during biological surveys; however, they could become present. The County will conduct raptor nest surveys prior to tree cutting or grading near mature trees to ensure that active nests are not present. A qualified biologist shall conduct the surveys and prepare a survey report. If no raptor nests are discovered in the trees to be removed, no further mitigation is required. If any active raptor nests are discovered, the biologist shall mark all occupied trees and delineate a 300-foot buffer area around each occupied tree. No construction activity shall occur within the 300-foot buffer until the young have fledged, as determined by a qualified biologist.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative would reduce the potential for direct impacts to sensitive bird species that would result from the proposed project. The No Project Alternative would eliminate the potential impacts to sensitive bird species because there would be no construction or realignment of the road that could impact their foraging and potential nesting habitat. However, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the objectives of the project.

The No Sycamore Avenue Extension Alternative would result in less impact to mature vegetation, and therefore less potential impact to nesting and foraging habitat for sensitive birds. However, this alternative would not accomplish the goals of improving the transportation network by realigning South Santa Fe Avenue with Sycamore Avenue/Buena Creek Road to form a four-leg intersection, nor would it improve drainage conditions to accommodate 100-year flows and reduce flooding in the area adjacent to Buena Creek.

The Alternate Railroad Crossing Component Alternative would result in 1.11 acres less significant impacts to nonnative grasslands than the proposed project. This would result in less potential impact to foraging habitat for sensitive birds. However, the railroad crossing component in this alternative would not combine the railroad crossing with the four-leg intersection at South Santa Fe Avenue/York Drive/Woodland Drive. In addition, the operational efficiency of the intersection would be affected because of the potential conflict between the traffic signal at the intersection and the railroad crossing.

7. AESTHETIC RESOURCES

Significant Effect: The proposed project could result in a significant aesthetic impact due to light and glare from headlights that could be intrusive to two residences on Poinsettia Avenue (225 and 231 Poinsettia Avenue), which would be considered a significant impact. Nighttime headlights from westbound traffic on the new connection from Poinsettia Avenue to South Santa Fe Avenue could potentially shine into two residences, resulting in a new light pollution source.

Finding: Pursuant to CEQA §21801(a)(1), changes or alternations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

Rationale: Mitigation of the aesthetic impact can be achieved through the provision of landscaping to shield the two residences from the light pollution.

The County shall provide shrubs to the two residences on Poinsettia Avenue (225 and 231 Poinsettia Avenue) of sufficient height and density (at least 5-gallon containers) to minimize light impacts from oncoming headlights of the new Poinsettia Avenue/South Santa Fe Avenue connection. In addition, landscaping will occur at key locations as detailed in Subchapter 2.7 of the Final EIR.

Project Alternatives: The No Project Alternative would not result in the creation of a new light pollution source to two residences. The No Project Alternative would not construct the new connection from Poinsettia Avenue to South Santa Fe Avenue; therefore the two residences would not be subject to light and glare from oncoming headlights.

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

South Santa Fe Avenue Reconstruction Project
San Diego, California
State Clearinghouse Number 1999061053
June 16, 2004

THE STATEMENT

The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego adopts and makes this statement of overriding considerations concerning the project's unavoidable significant impacts to explain why the project's benefits override and outweigh its unavoidable impacts. The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego finds that the Proposed Project's unavoidable impacts are acceptable in light of the project's benefits. Each benefit set forth below constitutes an overriding consideration warranting approval of the project, independent of the other benefits, despite each and every unavoidable impact.

1. The proposed project would improve the operational efficiency at the York Drive/Woodland Avenue intersection and railroad crossing by reconstructing this intersection to a four-leg intersection with South Santa Fe Avenue. Currently, York Drive and Woodland Avenue intersect with South Santa Fe Avenue at separate unsignalized locations with South Santa Fe Avenue crossing the railroad tracks between the two intersections. This situation creates potential conflict points between traffic and the train because of the separation of intersections within a short distance. The new four-leg intersection would improve railroad-crossing operations by creating one signalized intersection with controlled crossing of the railroad tracks that would pass through the center of the intersection. This newly combined intersection will minimize the conflict points by joining the three intersections that exist today (Woodland Drive, York Drive, and the railroad track intersection) into one intersection. This combined intersection will enhance safety for motorists, pedestrians, and the trains.

These improvements would help to accommodate the North County Transit District's Sprinter Rail Project, thereby accommodating alternative transportation and smart growth in the area.

2. The proposed project would improve traffic operation on the local roadway network, including State Route 78, by increasing the capacity of South Santa Fe Avenue, realigning Sycamore Avenue, and adding traffic signals where warranted. South Santa Fe Avenue would be increased from a two-lane road to a four-lane Major Road and new or replacement traffic signals would be installed at various intersections along the project alignment. As stated in the Traffic Analysis (Appendix B to the EIR), many of the intersection and road segment operations will improve from Level of Service (LOS) F to as high as

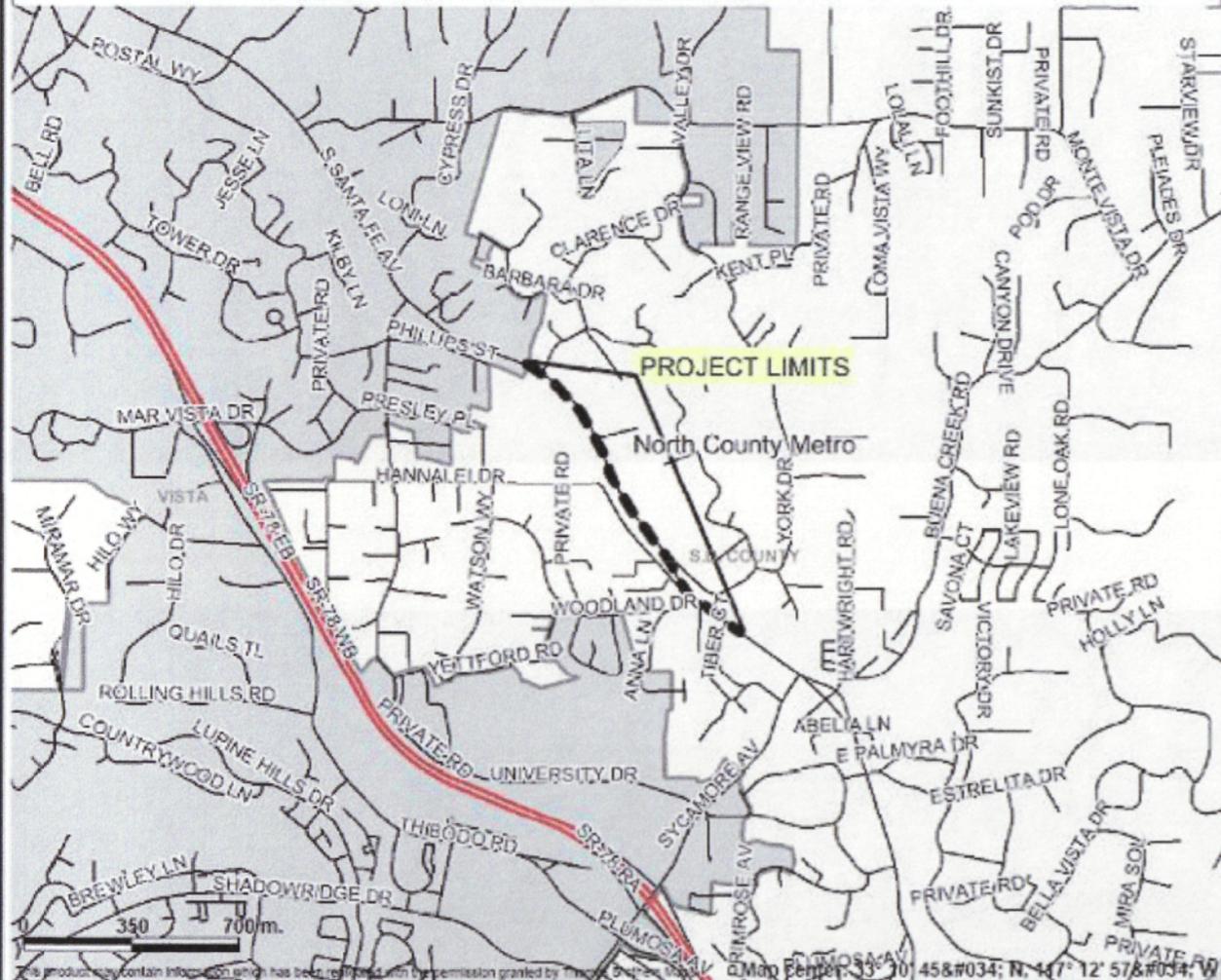
LOS B. The proposed project design would result in an overall improvement in traffic operations in the near-term and provide a roadway network that would accommodate forecasted traffic volumes.

3. The proposed project would improve emergency access to surrounding residences and businesses by improving the operational conditions and traffic flow throughout the project area.
4. The proposed project would improve bicycle access and enhance safety by providing two 6-foot bicycle lanes on South Santa Fe Avenue that would be striped and signed. Currently, bicycle access is generally available on the paved shoulders of South Santa Fe Avenue with no designated bicycle lane. The bicycle lanes included in the proposed project would be in conformance with the bicycle route designation for South Santa Fe Avenue in the County Circulation Element. These improvements would safely accommodate this alternative mode of transportation and help foster smart growth in the area.

The proposed project would also improve pedestrian safety along South Santa Fe Avenue by providing ADA-compliant sidewalks and curbs. Currently, pedestrian access along South Santa Fe Avenue is substandard with no concrete sidewalks or curbs along most sections. Installation of concrete sidewalks and curbs would provide a safer condition for pedestrians than that which currently exists.

5. The proposed project would reduce existing flooding problems in the area by providing drainage improvements that would enhance the capacity of Buena Creek and Agua Hedionda Creek to manage runoff and handle 100-year flood conditions. The current conditions of these creeks cause recurring flooding that impacts existing properties. The drainage improvements would lessen these recurring flooding risks.

SOUTH SANTA FE AVENUE NORTH



Legend

- Highways
- Freeways
- Streets
- Water Bodies
- Water Ditches
- Community Planning Area
- Incorporated Areas
- S.D. COUNTY
- Other

Scale: 1:20,000



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