

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: June 30 - July 1, 2010

Reference No.: 2.3b.(2)
Action item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Timothy Craggs
Chief Division of Design
(Interim)

Subject: NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 05-SLO-101 PM 57.2
RESOLUTION S-744

RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted for transmittal to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) are New Public Road Connection Resolution S-744 and a location map of the proposed connection to State Route (SR) 101. The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission approve the resolution and location map authorizing a new public road connection at 17th Street to southbound SR 101 in the city of El Paso de Robles, county of San Luis Obispo.

ISSUE:

The City of El Paso de Robles has requested approval of a new public road connection to SR 101. 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 to southbound SR 101 in the city of El Paso de Robles, county of San Luis Obispo, at Post Mile 57.2.

Recommended by: RICHARD D. LAND
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND:

The City of El Paso de Robles and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) in cooperation with the Department are working on a project to provide operational and access improvements along SR 101 and at the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange within the limits of the City of El Paso de Robles. The proposed project improvements include the relocation of the existing isolated 16th Street southbound SR 101 off-ramp to 17th Street and the construction of a new 17th Street southbound SR 101 on-ramp, creating a new public road access to SR 101. This new connection, just south of the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange, will help reduce congestion and decrease delays on the local street grid and improve operations on the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange.

In the project vicinity, the California Highway Commission adopted SR 101 as a freeway on July 20, 1949. SR 101 is the major and historic thoroughfare through the Central Coast areas of California and the principal inter-city connection for numerous communities between Los Angeles and San Francisco. SR 101 within the project limits accommodates significant amounts of interregional traffic, including commercial and agricultural trucking, tourist, and business traffic. SR 101 is on the Freeway and Expressway System and is part of the National Highway System. It is functionally classified as a principal arterial. The Federal Department of Defense, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, has also identified SR 101 as a Strategic Highway Corridor Network Route. In addition, SR 101 is on the Interregional Road System and is a designated Focus Route in the Department's Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan. SR 101 is also a State Highway Extra Legal Load Route and is a designated route on the National Truck Network under the 1990 Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act.

The SR 46 corridor is a major east-west corridor and truck route serving the San Joaquin Valley and San Luis Obispo County regional traffic. The SR 46 corridor in the City of El Paso de Robles area includes the section of SR 101 between the interchanges at SR 46 east of SR 101 (SR 46 E), on the north, and at SR 46 west of SR 101 (SR 46 W), on the south. Heavy regional use impacts traffic operations at the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange and southbound SR 101 between the SR 46 interchanges. The SR 46 corridor operates at Level of Service (LOS) C during weekdays and at LOS F during weekends. Heavy regional traffic is due to weekend travel between the Central Valley area and the Central Coast area, particularly during the summer months.

At the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange SR 46 E is a four-lane expressway and SR 101 is a four-lane freeway facility. Improvements to alleviate congestion for the westbound SR 46 to southbound SR 101 left turn movement are needed since ramp capacity is often exceeded during the peak hours. The excess demand causes a traffic queue past the northbound SR 101 off-ramp intersection and into the westbound SR 46 E through lane. In order to provide additional capacity to the southbound SR 101 on-ramp, the proposed project includes re-striping on SR 46 E and widening of the on-ramp to provide dual left turn movement onto southbound SR 101 from westbound SR 46 E. To avoid weaving problems along this section of SR 101, the project also includes the construction of an auxiliary lane on southbound SR 101 from SR 46 to the new proposed exit ramp at 17th Street.

The 16th Street exit ramp is an isolated single lane exit ramp that has two separate connections to Riverside Avenue approximately 210-feet apart. These two separate connections can result in driver confusion and the potential for wrong way movements. The limited freeway connections within the SR 46 corridor along SR 101 contribute to greater congestion and longer delays on the local street grid. Relocating the existing exit ramp to the 17th Street/Riverside Avenue intersection accommodates the addition of an entrance ramp to southbound SR 101 and improves the existing isolated exit ramp condition while relieving congestion on the local street system.

The downtown area of City of El Paso de Robles is located to the west of SR 101. The County of San Luis Obispo is experiencing continued growth east of SR 101. Anticipated traffic growth is expected to further degrade the SR 101/SR 46 E interchange operations.

SLOCOG in conjunction with the City of El Paso de Robles and the Department prepared the SR 101 North County Corridor Study, adopted on September 8, 1999. This study included as priority improvements the proposed new connection at 17th Street, the re-striping on SR 46 E, and the southbound SR 101 on-ramp widening. The construction of these improvements and the new SR 101 connection at 17th Street will improve the operations of the adjacent interchanges and arterial roads by providing existing traffic a new point of direct access to SR 101. These improvements will also support planned development and growth in the area.

A Project Study Report, prepared by the City of El Paso de Robles, was approved by the Department on May 10, 2004. The City also prepared the Project Report approved by the Department on April 30, 2010.

Public meetings were held in the form of presentations at City Council Meetings and separate stakeholder meetings as necessary. A public workshop was held in coordination with public circulation of the environmental document on August 26, 2009. The proposed project has the support of the public as well as the County of San Luis Obispo, SLOCOG and the Department and there is no known opposition to the project from the community or special interest groups at this time.

The current estimated capital cost for the project is \$9.7 million. This project is included in the 2005 SLOCOG Regional Transportation Plan and in the 2007 SLOCOG Transportation Improvement Program. The project is programmed in the 2010 State Transportation Improvement Plan.

A Fact Sheet Exception to a Mandatory Design Standard and a Fact Sheet Exception to an Advisory Design Standard were approved in March 2004. Additional Supplemental Fact Sheet Exceptions to Advisory Design Standards were approved on July 7, 2009 and on April 8, 2010.

The California Environmental Quality Act has been satisfied by certification of the Initial Study with a Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by the Department and certified on April 30, 2010. The Federal requirements were met when the project was determined to be Categorical Excluded under NEPA. The environmental document for this new connection is being submitted for the Commission approval as a concurrent environmental action under Item 2.2c (9).

A superseding Freeway Agreement was adopted by the City of El Paso de Robles on April 6, 2010, and will be executed by the Department after Commission approval of the new connection.

Attachments:

Resolution S-744

Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection
05-SLO-101 PM 57.2**

Resolution S-744

WHEREAS, the City of El Paso de Robles has requested approval of a new public road connection on State Route 101 for 17th Street; and

WHEREAS, the Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration was approved on April 30, 2010 in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act; and

WHEREAS, the Federal requirements were met when the project was determined to be Categorically Excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, the project will have impacts on the environment that will be mitigated.

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 101 at 17th Street, Post Mile 57.2, in the county of San Luis Obispo.

NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION LOCATION MAP 05 - SLO - 101

