March 10, 2008

Ms. Pearl Young
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Federal Activities, EIS Filing Section
Mail Code 2252-A, Room 7241
Ariel Rios Building (South Oval Lobby)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Subject: I-405 Sepulveda Pass HOV Widening Project (10 to 101) Final EIS Federal Register Publication (Errata)

Dear Ms. Young:

On February 27, 2008 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) transmitted the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/EIR) and a Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Interstate 405 Sepulveda Pass Widening Project to your office. Please be advised that the FEIS and the Section 4(f) Evaluation approval date has been changed to February 29, 2008.

We believe that you have processed our previous request that a Notice of Availability be published in the Federal Register in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.10. Enclosed are (a) five (5) copies of the revised signature page of the FEIS/EIR and (b) response to the U.S. General Services Administration Pacific Rim Region letter dated December 14, 2007 (well after the October 1, 2007 end of comment period), for your review and distribution. This document has been transmitted to all appropriate Federal, State, regional, and local agencies, as well as to other interested parties.

Any comments on this environmental document should be addressed to:

Carlos J. Montez
Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans, District 7
100 South Main Street, MS-16A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"
If you have any questions please call me at (213) 897-0703 or Cesar Perez (FHWA) at (916) 498-5065.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Kosinski
Deputy District Director
Caltrans, District 7 for FHWA

Enclosures

Cc: Gene Fong
   FHWA Division Administrator

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"
WIDEN INTERSTATE 405 (SAN DIEGO FREEWAY) FROM INTERSTATE 10 TO US-101 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION


Jan. 31, 2008
Date of Approval

Ron Kosinski
Deputy District Director
District 7 Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation

Feb 27 2008
Date of Approval

Douglas R. Failing
District Director
District 7
California Department of Transportation

The following person may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

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Abstract

This Final EIR/EIS addresses alternatives for widening and improving Interstate 405 (I-405) from Interstate 10 (I-10) to U.S. Highway 101 (US-101) in Los Angeles County. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing to add a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on northbound I-405 from approximately National Blvd. (I-10) to Ventura Blvd. (US-101) in the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County. Alternative 2 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative after careful consideration of all agency and public comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. The recommended alternative would involve landform alterations and aesthetic impacts, impacts to homes, displacement of existing urban land uses and community disruption, traffic, air quality and noise effects, water quality, biological resources, impacts on utilities and short-term construction impacts. Mitigation measures would reduce the level of significance of these impacts.
NOTE: This GSA comment letter was received well after the October 1, 2007 “end of comment period.” However, since GSA is a major stakeholder, they were given verbal assurance that their late comments would be considered. Their comment letter and Caltrans’ responses were erroneously omitted from the Final EIR/EIS distribution.

Comments from the General Services Administration Pacific Rim Region on December 14, 2007:

1) Caltrans and FHWA engineers will ensure that vehicular access and maneuverability will not be affected by the further improved “fly-over” off-ramp. Caltrans will continue to consult with GSA and provide detailed constructability plans during final design.
2) A 10-foot high security wall will be built along the off ramp. This wall will be aesthetically treated on both sides.

3) A total of 9-10 parking stalls will be affected. However, 20 parking stalls would be provided on Caltrans land that can be transferred to GSA for compensation.
4) The traffic safety measures that GSA has proposed will be seriously considered. A traffic signal and curb painting may be included in the TMP, if warranted. The County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation will be involved in the consultation process for this and other TMP measures prior to construction.

5) Caltrans will work with GSA/FBI/USPS/Utility companies to address and solve these temporary construction concerns during final design and prior to construction. Concerns raised regarding air quality, noise, vibration, landscaping/vegetation, utilities, and traffic are addressed in the topical sections of this Final EIR/EIS.
(a) **Interchange Similar to Existing:** The accident rates are high and congestion is heavy at the existing interchange. A design maintaining the existing interchange configuration would create worse conditions than the current due to freeway widening (adding a northbound HOV lane and standardizing the northbound lanes, median, and shoulder). After the project is constructed, the safety and efficiency of the interchange would be worse than the current situation. It was determined that this alternative design variation was not viable.

(b) **Partial Cloverleaf Interchange:** This design would create a loss of two access points that would constitute a quarter of the connecting points. This loss would compromise the efficiency of this heavily traveled interchange. This design would require installation of two additional traffic signals at the ramp terminals along Wilshire Boulevard. Wilshire Boulevard will experience more congestion and accidents due to the proximity of the two signals, which would negatively affect freeway operations. All of these features would compromise the safety and efficiency of the interchange. It was determined that this design variation was not viable.

(c) **Diamond Interchange:** This design would create a loss of four of the eight access points of the existing full cloverleaf interchange. It does warrant the traffic demand at this location. This design would require installation of two additional traffic signals at the ramp terminals along Wilshire Boulevard. Wilshire Boulevard will experience more congestion and accidents due to the proximity of the two signals, which would negatively affect freeway operations. The accident rates and congestion would be worse than the partial diamond interchange. All of these would result in a less safe and efficient interchange. It was determined that this design variation was not viable.
(d) **Shortened Cloverleaf Interchange**: This design was similar to the recommended plan. GSA suggested that the northbound on-ramp be shortened and moved westerly to a point closer to the Sepulveda Blvd. intersection to reduce impacts on the federal property. This plan created two small radius curves that did not meet FHWA/Caltrans design standards. This plan also shortened the weaving distance from the street right turning point to the beginning of the on-ramp making it more difficult for vehicles turning right from Sepulveda Blvd. to Wilshire Blvd. The grade was also too steep for vehicles and could not be approved.

7) Caltrans has worked hard to reduce the impacts identified and we believe the recommended alternative is feasible. Caltrans eliminated the impacts to the USPS truck route and FBI loading ramp. Caltrans will pursue installing a signal and painting 150 feet of the curb on both sides of the entrance/exit. Caltrans and FHWA will continue to work with GSA et al during final design.

8) Due to the State's proposed project, several private utility lines need to be relocated. The relocation of these private service lines will require work outside the State's proposed right of way. The facilities are services installed and maintained on private property, and require relocation by the property owner/lessee. Costs related to the effort to relocate the facilities which conflict with the proposed construction, will be reimbursed by the State. Documentation substantiating actual cost of the completed work (contractor billing receipts with evidence of payments having been made) will then serve as a basis for reimbursement.

9) The Right-of-Way (RW) contract will be the document forming the agreement to reimburse costs incurred by the property owner related to relocation of private utility service lines. The RW contract will be presented with the First Written Offer, after the RW appraisal has been completed. The RW appraisal cannot be initiated until after the Environmental Document is approved, and more detailed RW maps are finalized. Therefore, with the proposed project schedule of milestones, the First Written Offer is targeted for September of 2008.
10) Caltrans has taken the following action:

- The final Caltrans Wilshire Boulevard interchange design eliminated impacts to the USPS truck route and the ramp to the underground loading dock.

- Caltrans minimized the impact to parking stalls in the GSA parking lot. Caltrans can compensate 10 affected parking stalls with 20 new ones.

- Caltrans will provide a 10-foot high security wall along the off-ramp in the parking lot. Caltrans will provide aesthetic treatment on both sides of the wall.

- Caltrans analyzed several alternatives for the design of the Wilshire Blvd. interchange. The advanced cloverleaf interchange is the only alternative that would improve safety and efficiency at this location.

- Caltrans is committed to ongoing coordination with GSA to resolve any outstanding concerns.