

Chapter 2 Environmental Impacts

This chapter combines a discussion of the environment in which the proposed project is to be built, potential effects of the proposed project alternatives on that environment, and measures proposed to minimize potential impacts. The environmental impacts presented in this IS are based on technical studies conducted on the basis of the original scope of Alternative 1 of the project, which included realignment of Kennedy Avenue. Since realigning Kennedy Avenue was eliminated from the scope of Alternative 1, any potential impacts listed in this section may be less than originally discussed in the draft IS.

2.1 Human Environment

2.1.1 Land Use and Growth

The project area consists of commercial businesses and residences. The impacts to current land use are less than significant. There will be no impacts to the coastal zone, wild and scenic rivers or parks and recreation. This is a safety improvement project and no growth inducing impacts are anticipated.

2.1.2 Farmlands/Agricultural Lands

There is farmland within the project area; however, the proposed project will not convert any farmland to non-agricultural use.

2.1.3 Community Impacts

This project may require acquisition of right of way easements for possible utility relocation. Impacts to community character are considered less than significant. Several alternatives were considered during project development (as discussed in Section 1.3). However, the project development team determined that the proposed project as designed provided the greatest benefit for improving the safety of the area with the least amount of impacts to businesses and residences.

During construction, access to businesses and residences may be limited for short intermittent periods of time while portions of the shoulder are rebuilt, driveways are reconfigured and during repavement. It is anticipated that lane and shoulder closures will be allowed during weekdays but may be restricted during peak commute hours

and on the weekend. It is recommended that one-way traffic control using flaggers be used. Construction should last approximately 2-3 months.

2.1.4 Utilities/Emergency Services

The proposed project may include the relocation of some existing utility poles. The exact location of the utility pole relocation is not known at this time, however it is anticipated that the poles will need to move approximately 2-5 ft away from the highway. Relocating utilities may require the removal and or trimming of trees and vegetation, and relocation of property fences to provide clearance for the power lines. Right-of-way easements may be necessary for utility relocation. Impacts due to utility relocation are considered less than significant.

2.1.5 Visual/Aesthetics

Viewers of this project will be the users of SR 32, business patrons and employees and residents in the area. There are several large mature trees on this section of SR 32. The trees serve as a buffer between the businesses and residences and the highway. SR 32 is not a Scenic Route, however the trees enhance the visual quality of the area. Construction of this project will require the removal of trees and vegetation to accommodate widening for the TWLTL and will have a moderate visual impact.

2.1.6 Cultural Resources

A Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) was prepared by Caltrans in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The HPSR summarizes studies conducted in the Historic Architectural Survey Report (HASR) and the Negative Archaeological Survey Report (ASR). The properties located within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) were evaluated for historical significance. Seven structures were built prior to 1957 and were evaluated by a qualified architectural historian, with the determination that none of the properties appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). No archaeological sites were identified within the APE. The Federal Highway Administration and the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with Caltrans determination that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project. There are no impacts to cultural resources expected.

2.1.6.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

In the event that buried archeological materials are encountered during construction, it is Caltrans' policy that work temporarily cease in the area of the find until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the materials and consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) about disposition of the materials (*Environmental Handbook*, Vol.2, Chapter1). If human remains are discovered or recognized during construction, there shall be no further excavation or disturbance of the site, or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains, until the appropriate county coroner has determined that the remains are not subject to provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American, he shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours. The NAHC will appoint a Most Likely Descendent for disposition of the remains (Health and Safety Code Sect. 7050.5, Public Resources Code Sect. 5097.24).

2.2 Physical Environment

2.2.1 Hydrology and Floodplain

In order to determine impacts to floodplains, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) number 06007C0485 (June 8, 1998) was reviewed. The map indicated that this project area is within an area “determined to be outside the 500-year floodplain.” This project will have no impacts to floodplains.

2.2.2 Water Quality and Storm Water Run-off

During construction there is the possibility that water quality will be impacted. Impacts to water quality will be less than significant.

2.2.2.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

The contractor shall implement storm water controls as specified in Section 7-1.01 G of the Caltrans Standard Specifications Handbook. Furthermore, the contractor must prepare a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP). The WPCP must identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) that shall be implemented during construction to minimize or reduce the potential for pollutant storm-water and non storm-water discharges. The BMPs identified and subsequently implemented shall comply with the requirements in the Caltrans Construction Site Best Management Practices

manual. If the project will disturb 1 acre or more of soil, or if Caltrans determines that the project poses a significant water quality risk, then the contractor must prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

2.2.3 Hazardous Waste/Materials

An Initial Site Assessment (ISA) was prepared to determine if hazardous waste exists within the project area. The ISA found that the potential for hazardous waste exists with respect to the following:

- Lead-contaminated soil may exist within Caltrans' right of way. The areas of primary concern are soils along routes with historically high vehicle emissions due to large traffic volumes, congestion or stop and go situations. Most Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) due to vehicle emissions was deposited prior to 1986 when nearly all lead was removed from gasoline in California. A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) will need to be performed to determine the level of ADL. Depending on test results, disturbed soil on the project may have to be managed as hazardous waste. If found to be hazardous, Special Provisions will be included in the contract for handling ADL.
- Yellow traffic markings potentially contain hazardous levels of lead chromate. If any yellow traffic markings are going to be removed separate from the adjacent pavement, the levels of lead and chromium need to be determined. Special Provisions will be included in the contract for handling the yellow traffic markings if appropriate.
- Hydrocarbon contaminated soils may be encountered during the installation of the utility poles. The soil at each pole location must be sampled to determine if contamination exists.

Impacts due to hazardous waste will be less than significant.

2.2.3.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

During construction, Special Provisions will be included in the contract and Caltrans Best Management Practices will be followed to avoid any possible impacts from hazardous waste.

2.2.4 Air Quality

This project is located in an attainment area for all Federal criteria air pollutants and is therefore exempt from a regional conformity analysis. A local carbon monoxide analysis is required for projects that are likely to worsen air quality. This project passes the criteria outlined in the “Transportation Project-Level Carbon Monoxide Protocol” and no further analysis is required. This project will not have any permanent air quality impacts.

Construction of the project will result in the generation of suspended particulate matter. Impacts from dust will be temporary, local, and limited to the areas of construction.

Butte County is known to contain ultramafic rock, which contains serpentine. Serpentine contains asbestos and can release asbestos into the air if the rock is highly disturbed. Ultramafic rock in Butte County is located primarily in the foothill area. The project area does not disturb any areas known to contain ultramafic rock. It is not anticipated that this project will release any asbestos into the air.

2.2.4.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

To minimize the impacts from construction and because the project is in a state PM₁₀ (particulate matter) non-attainment area, dust control practices must be incorporated into the project. The dust control practices must comply with the current Caltrans Standard Specifications and Butte County Air Quality Management District Rule 207-Fugitive Dust Emissions.

2.2.5 Noise

Federal guidelines define traffic noise impacts as “impacts which occur when the predicted traffic noise levels approach or exceed the existing noise levels.” The Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 1100 (Caltrans 1990) adopts the Federal noise abatement criteria. Caltrans currently uses a Leq of 66 decibels (dBA) as the threshold of identifying significant impacts.

Sound level measurements and traffic counts were conducted on November 14, 2002 at one site within the project area. The site was chosen because of its close proximity to an existing residential dwelling. The purpose of the measurement was to determine the existing ambient noise level. The existing noise levels of 70.8 dBA already exceed the Federal criteria. The project will increase noise levels by 1 to 2 dBA. An increase of less than 3dBA is not perceptible to the human ear and is not considered

significant. Projected future noise levels for the built project were the same for those if the project is not constructed.

Noise barriers, such as sound walls were evaluated and were not considered to be feasible. A noise barrier is considered feasible if it can achieve a noise reduction of 5 dBA. The right of way does not include access control and driveways must be maintained and a 5dBA noise reduction could not be obtained. Therefore, construction of a soundwall is not an effective noise barrier.

2.2.5.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Construction noise from the contractor equipment is unavoidable. However, this is a temporary noise source regulated by Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 7-1.01 I, which is included as part of the contract. The contractor is required to comply with all local sound control and noise level rules, regulations, and ordinances.

2.3 Biological Environment

2.3.1 Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States

No wetlands or waters of the US will be impacted by this project.

2.3.2 Vegetation

Vegetation located directly within the project area includes ruderal grasses and several tree species. Upon completion of construction, exposed soil within the right of way should be revegetated if possible. This should consist of native flora, where applicable, under the discretion of the Landscape Architect.

2.3.3 Wildlife

Due to the associated traffic of SR 32 and the close proximity of commercial businesses, the project area is highly disturbed and supports little wildlife. Field surveys confirmed the lack of wildlife presence. There will be no impacts to wildlife resources. Measures will be followed to protect migratory birds.

2.3.3.1 Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Removal of all trees will occur between September 16th and March 14th to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Fish and Game Codes 3503 and 3503.5.

2.3.4 Threatened and Endangered Species

The California Natural Diversity DataBase (CNDDDB) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service Special Status Species List were reviewed to determine the potential for threatened and endangered species to be present within the project area. A field review was conducted by a Caltrans biologist on May 10, 2002. The field review found that no listed, endangered, or threatened species or critical habitat exists within the project area. No impacts will occur to these biological resources.

2.4 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are those that are produced by the aggregation of individual impacts resulting from a single project or from two or more projects in conjunction. Caltrans has proposed a similar project on SR 32 near Muir Avenue (EA 4A4500). The Muir Avenue project is planned for construction in summer 2003 and includes the construction of a two-way left turn lane. The Muir project will require minor widening, utility relocation and vegetation removal. An additional project (EA 1C370) is proposed southeast of project area. The project proposes to install left turn channelization for West Lindo Avenue. This project has not yet been evaluated for environmental impacts. However, it is not anticipated that there will be any impacts from this project and no cumulative impacts from the three projects are expected.