

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration

RECORD OF DECISION

MARIN 101 HOV LANE GAP CLOSURE PROJECT

U.S. 101 in Marin County
Between Lucky Drive and North San Pedro Road

DECISION

This Record of Decision documents the Federal Highway Administration's approval of the Southbound/Reversible High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane Gap Closure Alternative as the selected alternative for the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project on US 101 and Interstate 580 in Marin County, California. The project limits extend from Lucky Drive in Corte Madera to North San Pedro Road in San Rafael on US 101 in Marin County, a total project length on US 101 of 7.9 kilometers (4.9 miles) and on I-580 of 1.6 kilometers (1.0 mile). The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative will provide a continuous HOV lane in both northbound and southbound directions during peak traffic periods and is the preferred alternative. This project will provide additional benefit by reducing corridor delay, encouraging the use of buses, vanpools and carpools, enhancing existing inter-modal transportation options, relieving traffic congestion and adding capacity in the off-peak period.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project will close the existing gap in the HOV lane system on US 101 between Richardson Bay Bridge and Route 37. The selected alternative involves the construction of HOV facilities in two stages. The first stage of the project will close the gap in the existing southbound HOV lane system. A southbound HOV lane will be constructed and put into operation. The first stage of the project will provide one additional lane on southbound US 101 between North San Pedro Road and Lucky Drive for a total of four southbound lanes. In the morning peak traffic periods, there will be three mixed-use lanes and one HOV lane for southbound travel. In a second stage, the southbound lane added under the first phase will be converted into a northbound and southbound reversible HOV lane, see Section 2.2.5, "The Southbound/ Reversible HOV Lane Alternative," in the *Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)*. In the second stage, the southbound HOV lane will be converted into a reversible northbound and southbound reversible HOV lane with a moveable barrier which will provide a southbound HOV lane in the morning and a northbound HOV lane in the afternoon. A transport vehicle will move the moveable barrier from one side of the HOV lane to the other.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative's design "footprint" is nearly identical to the Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative, see the *FEIS/R*, Section 2.2.4, "The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative." The right of way and environmental impacts of the selected alternative are similar to the Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative and considerably less than the Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative, see Section 2.2.3, "The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*. The cost is only slightly higher than a southbound only HOV lane, see the *FEIS/R*, Section 2.2.4, "The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," and considerably less than the ultimate addition of two lanes, see Section 2.2.3, "The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative meets the project purpose, is the environmentally preferred alternative, and has been approved as the selected alternative. Estimated costs for the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative are as follows:

	Phase 1 – Southbound HOV Lane	Phase 2–Reversible HOV Lane
Construction	\$40,400,000	\$25,700,000
R/W	22,600,000	200,000
Moveable Barrier Vehicle (Operations/Maintenance)	- 0 -	2,200,000
Support	<u>15,400,000</u>	<u>8,500,000</u>
Total	\$78,400,000	\$36,600,000
Programmed (STIP)	- 78,400,000	- 3,450,000
TEA 21 Earmarked Funds	<u>- 0 -</u>	<u>- 5,250,000</u>
Additional Funds Required	- 0 -	\$27,900,000

Annual operating costs are included in the estimate above for the moveable barrier vehicle.

ALTERNATIVES

The *Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)* describes and evaluates four alternatives in detail. They are:

- No-Build Alternative,
- Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative,
- Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative, and
- Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative.

These and numerous other alternatives were considered and evaluated in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R)* and in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)*. The alternatives evaluated in detail and the alternatives considered and withdrawn are described below:

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not implement any changes or construction within the project limits. The No-Build Alternative does not fulfill the project purpose and need because it does not contribute towards a continuous HOV lane system on US 101 in Marin County, nor does it reduce delay, relieve congestion or encourage the use of buses, vanpools and carpools.

The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative

The Southbound Only HOV Lane Alternative would add one southbound lane on US 101, between North San Pedro Road and Lucky Drive, for a total of four southbound through lanes, three mixed-flow lanes and one HOV lane, during the morning peak period. There would be a continuous HOV lane system on southbound US 101 in Marin County starting at State Route 37 in Novato and ending at State Route 1 in Mill Valley. The operating time for the HOV lane would be the morning peak traffic period, and the remainder of the time the lane would be used as a mixed-flow lane. This alternative does not include a northbound HOV lane between Lucky Drive and North San Pedro Road. For the *DEIS/R*, the Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative was presented as an interim goal which was fundable, compatible with and fully utilized by the Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative.

The 1998 estimated cost of the Southbound Only HOV Lane Alternative is \$62,201,000.

The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative

The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative proposes to close the gap in the existing HOV lane system on US 101 between Lucky Drive and North San Pedro Road in Marin County by adding a northbound HOV lane and a separate southbound HOV lane. The proposed improvements would widen the existing six-lane freeway to accommodate one additional lane in each direction, which would operate as HOV lanes during peak traffic periods. In addition to the northbound and southbound HOV lanes, the proposed work includes construction of northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes and improvements to the US 101/I-580 Interchange, including a northbound US 101 to eastbound I-580 direct connector. This would allow redirection of East Bay bound traffic from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard avoiding traffic congestion at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal. The replacement of the existing northbound San Rafael Viaduct structure is included in this project.

The 1998 estimated cost of the Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative is \$153,000,000.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative was presented in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R)* as “considered and withdrawn.” This alternative was revived due to considerable interest expressed during review of the *DEIS/R* and because additional funds became available. Additionally, more information on the operation of a reversible HOV lane with a moveable barrier became available. A southbound HOV lane would be constructed as a first stage and put into operation. In the second stage, this southbound HOV lane would be converted to a reversible lane with a moveable barrier to provide an HOV lane in the northbound or southbound directions along US 101. This system would provide an HOV lane for the peak traffic period in each direction. The right of way acquired for the construction of the southbound HOV lane is sufficient for the construction of the reversible HOV lane. The lane would operate as a mixed-flow lane during off-peak periods (including midday, nights and weekends).

The reversible lane would be converted from northbound to southbound or vice versa by a transport vehicle that transports moveable barrier. As the vehicle moves down the reversible lane it picks up and relocates the moveable barrier from one side of the reversible lane to the other. The transport vehicle reaches one end of the project opening the reversible lane in the opposite direction. The total capitalized operating cost over a 20-year period is estimated to be \$2,200,000.

The 1998 estimated cost for the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Alternative is \$87,277,000. This includes the operating and maintenance costs of the moveable barrier for 20 years.

Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn

Many alternatives were evaluated in the *DEIS/R* and were withdrawn due to reasons described in detail in the *DEIS/R* and in Section 2.3, "Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn," in the *FEIS/R*. The alternatives that were considered and withdrawn are:

- an 8.0 meter (26 foot) median with east or west side widening options;
- a 1.8 meter (6 foot) median with east and symmetrical widening options;
- constructing a double deck through San Rafael;
- constructing a depressed section through San Rafael;
- a southbound only HOV lane with east side widening;

- using part of Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWPR) right of way for a southbound only HOV lane;
- a reversible HOV lane option on the northbound side at the I-580 interchange;
- a reversible HOV lane with continuous fixed barrier;
- building the northern portion and purchasing right of way for the central portion;
- transit options - rail, ferry, buses;
- traffic systems management (TSM);
- converting existing lanes to HOV lanes;
- converting NWPR right of way to busway; and
- using NWPR right of way for HOV lanes.

These alternatives were withdrawn from consideration due to one or more of the following reasons:

- engineering criteria,
- failure to meet project purpose and need
- roadway geometrics,
- larger right of way impacts,
- increased cost or
- increased environmental impacts.

BASIS FOR DECISION

Planning for the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project has been a systematic, interdisciplinary approach, including studying the potential project alternatives, evaluating the environmental issues, and timely public outreach. Input from agencies and the public has greatly influenced the process and accordingly, influenced the selection of alternatives considered. The *Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)* evaluates the ability of the alternatives to meet the primary project purpose and need of relieving recurring traffic congestion by completing the US 101 HOV lane system between the Richardson Bay Bridge and Route 37. The *FEIS/R* also evaluates the environmental consequences of each of the proposed project alternatives and the efforts to avoid and minimize the adverse effects.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) considered all of the input and all of the factors in reaching a balance between an effective transportation facility and minimizing adverse effects. The following paragraphs summarize the specific considerations given substantial weight in this decision.

The potential of each alternative evaluated in the *FEIS/R* to meet the project purpose is as follows:

- The No Build Alternative does not fulfill the project purpose and need and does not relieve congestion, see Section 2.2.2, "No-Build Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.
- The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative will provide a southbound HOV lane and will relieve southbound traffic congestion. There will be no change in the northbound lanes or traffic congestion, see Section 2.2.4, "The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.
- The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative proposes widening the existing freeway to accommodate one additional lane in each direction, which would operate as HOV lanes during peak traffic periods. This alternative would relieve southbound and northbound peak traffic congestion and completes both the northbound and southbound HOV lane system on US 101. In addition to the northbound and southbound HOV lanes, the proposed work includes additional auxiliary lanes and

other improvements, see Section 2.2.3, "The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.

- The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative would construct and put into operation a southbound HOV lane as a first stage. In the second stage, this southbound HOV lane would be converted to a reversible lane with a moveable barrier to provide an HOV lane in the northbound or southbound directions along US 101. This alternative meets the project purpose and need by providing a northbound and southbound peak period HOV lane and relieving northbound and southbound peak period traffic, see Section 2.2.5, "The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.

Of these alternatives, considered in detail in the *FEIS/R*, analysis of the adverse environmental consequences of each indicate:

- The No Build Alternative would not implement any changes and had no project-related adverse impacts. However, this alternative does not fulfill the project purpose and need and does not relieve congestion. The No Build Alternative does not offer an overall improvement to air quality when compared to the Build alternatives.
- The Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative and the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative had similar impacts to each other. They generally occupied the same footprint and had similar effects on the environment.
- The Ultimate HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative had the most adverse impacts of any of the alternatives under consideration.

Detailed information on the environmental consequences of the alternatives is contained in the *FEIS/R*. Table 1, "Comparison of Alternatives," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R* compares the environmental consequences of each alternative in tabular form. Chapter 4, "Consequences and Mitigation," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R* discusses the environmental effects of each alternative in detail.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative received considerable interest during review of the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R)* since it would provide an HOV lane for the peak traffic period in each direction. In addition, the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative occupied the same footprint and had similar effects on the environment as the Southbound Only HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative. The right of way acquired for the construction of the southbound HOV lane is sufficient for the construction of the reversible HOV lane. Additional funding became available, as did information on the operation of a reversible HOV lane with a moveable barrier. The lane would operate as a mixed-flow lane during off-peak periods (including midday, nights and weekends) and provide an HOV lane for the peak traffic period in each direction.

The reversible lane would be converted from northbound to southbound or vice versa by a transport vehicle that transports the moveable barrier. As the transport vehicle moves down the reversible lane it picks up and relocates the moveable barrier from one side of the reversible lane to the other. The transport vehicle reaches one end of the project opening the reversible lane in the opposite direction, see Section 2.2.5, "The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative," in the *FEIS/R*.

For these reasons, the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative meets the project purpose and need and has been approved as the selected alternative.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

The mitigation measures described below have been or will be incorporated into the project to reduce the impact of constructing the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project. Other measures to mitigate project impacts, including standard specifications and practices, are included in Chapter 4, "Consequences and Mitigation," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R* and in Volume II of the *FEIS/R*, "Responses to Agency and Public Comments to the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report*." These mitigation measures are summarized below and incorporated into this Record of Decision by reference.

Natural Environment

The *FEIS/R* evaluates the potential adverse effects of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project alternatives on the natural resources, including habitats and species of concern, occurring within the project limits, see Volume I, Section 4.6, "Natural Environment." There was considerable effort dedicated to investigating options to avoid and minimize the effects of the project on the natural environment. The existing alignment of US 101 and a variety of other factors have limited the choices and limited the design options to avoid impacts to natural resources.

The Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project has two types of potential impacts to natural resources in the US 101 corridor:

- Temporary, construction-related impacts on the natural resources are transitory and end upon completion of construction. These temporary construction effects are avoided or minimized by specific restrictions listed in Caltrans *Standard Specifications* and/or by conditions required by permitting and regulatory agencies, see Section 4.17, "Temporary Effects During Construction," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*.
- Unavoidable permanent habitat and species impacts on natural resources resulting from the project generally require replacement strategies for mitigation of habitat and individual species losses. The Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project mitigation/replacement strategies are specified in the *Conceptual Riparian and Tree Replacement Mitigation for the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project Report*, referenced in the *FEIS/R* available for review at the Caltrans District 4 Office, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland.

The goals of a mitigation plan are to avoid and minimize adversely affecting sensitive natural resources and to compensate for losses of these resources if impacts are unavoidable. Caltrans biologists and landscape architects prepare conceptual mitigation plans for the unavoidable project-related effects of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project to meet permit requirements. Unavoidable impacts to wetlands, to waters of the U.S. and to sensitive habitats are mitigated by in-kind restoration or replacement. The successful implementation of the mitigation will ensure that no net loss of waters of the U.S. and no cumulative loss of sensitive habitat result from the project.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project will place no fill in jurisdictional wetlands or in waters of the U.S. at Corte Madera and San Rafael Creeks. Although the project includes permanent piles in Corte Madera Creek to support widening of the bridge, the Army Corps of Engineers does not consider scattered piles used to support transportation facilities in jurisdictional wetlands and in waters of the U.S. as fill under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The tidal wetlands and the adjacent isolated wetlands at these sites will be fenced as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA) for protection and avoidance of sensitive natural resources. Irwin Creek will also be fenced as an environmentally sensitive area (ESA) for construction of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Caltrans acknowledge their commitment to mitigate impacts to Irwin Creek due to the project-related relocation of the Northwestern Pacific

Railroad (NWPR) right of way and future freeway improvements. Currently, there are no specific plans or schedule for a rail transit project in the NWPR right of way. The project sponsors, Caltrans and FHWA accept the responsibility to provide adequate in-kind mitigation for impacts to waters of the U.S. at Irwin Creek necessitated by relocation of the rail right of way.

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project affects approximately 400 square meters (4300 square feet) of oak/bay woodlands at Cal Park Hill and in the Linden Lane and Grand Avenue area. The relocation of the NWPR right of way requires additional clearing of riparian and other woodland habitats west of US 101 from north of Myrtle Avenue to south of Linden Lane. Mitigation for impacts to trees and to oak/bay woodland includes a consolidation of habitat and tree replacement into two areas. These areas, so planned for mitigation of impacts to oak/bay woodlands, are within the state right of way, west of US 101, and between Fair Drive and Merrydale Road, see Figure 17, "Potential Tree Planting Mitigation Areas," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*.

Three animal species of concern, the California brown pelican, the Central California steelhead, and the Sacramento splittail, may occur in the project vicinity during certain times of the year, see Section 3.6.3, "Species of Concern," in the *FEIS/R*. The California brown pelican is a casual visitor to the project vicinity and does not nest in the project area at Corte Madera Creek. The Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project would have no affect on this species. The Central California steelhead and the Sacramento splittail may potentially migrate through the project area during the winter spawning season. There will be no in-creek project-related activities from October 15 to June 1 to avoid impacting these species. Caltrans biologists, acting through the Federal Highway Administration, have consulted with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding these species. These agencies concur that the project will not adversely affect listed species. Accordingly, mitigation is not planned.

Two plant species of concern, the Tiburon tarplant and Santa Cruz microseris, are present within the project limits on the cut slopes of Cal Park Hill. Construction of the southbound/reversible HOV lane will not affect these plant species of concern.

Hazardous Waste

Adverse impacts would occur if construction workers or members of the public were exposed to hazardous wastes during grading, excavation, demolition, or other project-related activities or if hazardous waste migration were increased by project activities. Disposal of contaminated materials, soils, or groundwater could also transport contaminants out of the project area and possibly increase public health concerns.

To minimize the potential adverse, project-related effects on workers and on public health due to the presence of hazardous materials, all project and construction activities in contaminated areas will follow established Caltrans procedures. The presence of contamination can potentially impact construction timing and costs. Caltrans policy is to acquire property that is free of contamination. Where that is not possible, Caltrans seeks reimbursement from the responsible party for hazardous waste cleanup.

Six parcels along Francisco Boulevard West have been identified as having asbestos containing materials that must be removed and disposed of prior to building demolition activities, see Section 3.7.2, "Francisco Boulevard West Site Investigation Results," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. An additional asbestos and lead paint demolition investigation will be conducted and contaminants will be abated prior to the demolition of existing buildings and improvements on Francisco Boulevard West. The findings and recommendations of the project's hazardous waste technical reports will be incorporated in the project plans and specifications and all work will be

in accordance with the *National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act*, federal and State of California Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, as well as other applicable sections of the California Code of Regulations and pertinent local ordinances.

Two parcels along Francisco Boulevard West had soil lenses containing total petroleum hydrocarbons in the heavier diesel range (TPH-D) exceeding 100 mg/kg at depth, see Section 3.7.2, "Francisco Boulevard West Site Investigation Results," and Figure 6, "Site Locations of Impacted Areas-Francisco Boulevard West," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. The local areas of elevated hydrocarbon soil, encountered during construction, will be handled appropriately. If excavation and disposal of any of the TPH-D laden soil is required, the soil will be disposed of in a Class II non-hazardous landfill in accordance with all state and local regulations.

One parcel contained cadmium-laden soil. This cadmium-laden soil is outside the boundaries of the project construction and will not be disturbed.

Beneath the existing San Rafael elevated viaduct structure, tests of the soil adjacent to column footings indicate several areas of hazardous waste contamination. The principle contaminants include total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons and lead, see Section 3.7.3, "San Rafael Viaduct Investigation Results," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. Caltrans already owns the property beneath the San Rafael elevated viaduct structure. The excavation of footing areas for remedial cleanup activities is not practical prior to construction. Therefore, removal and disposal of materials would occur during construction activities.

A Health and Safety Plan will be in place to protect workers, the public, and the environment from construction activities where exposure could result from contact with contaminated soil or hazardous wastes or during excavation, transport and/or disposal of contaminated materials. This plan includes personal protective equipment, safe work practices, site control, exposure monitoring, decontamination procedures and an emergency response plan. Oversight, notification, or permitting by the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board may be required.

With these measures, the potential hazardous waste impacts associated with project-related activities would be minimal. All activities related to the excavation, transport and disposal of contaminated materials will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal and State requirements.

Water Quality

The *FEIS/R* evaluates the potential of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project to adversely affect the water quality and to affect the beneficial uses of water resources in the project vicinity. The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has developed and implemented a *Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan)* for the San Francisco Bay region. The *Basin Plan* includes specific beneficial uses and water quality objectives for Corte Madera Creek and San Rafael Creek, and potential beneficial uses of groundwater in the San Rafael Basin, see Section 3.8.2, "Current Water Quality Basin Plan," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*.

The RWQCB *Basin Plan* provides a standard for activities affecting water quality in the San Francisco Bay region, see Section 3.8.2, "Current Water Quality Basin Plan," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. The existing drainage system and the proposed improvements are designed to collect and remove surface water from the traveled way and adhere to the best management principles of storm water pollution prevention as contained in current permits and approvals, including that required for construction.

Construction activities have the potential to degrade water quality and threaten the beneficial uses of water resources in the project area. Prior to the start of construction activities, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) will be required to outline construction best management practices (BMP) to be used to minimize adverse effects on receiving waters. These plans spell out detailed control measures to be followed, such as sediment retention plans, materials handling and storage, spill prevention and erosion blankets. These and other specific pollution control measures will be included in the project design specifications. These measures to limit erosion, sedimentation and the release of chemicals into water bodies will minimize any degradation of water quality during construction.

Caltrans adheres to the Caltrans *Water Quality Handbook*. This includes Construction Staff Guidelines, Construction Contractors Guidelines and Specifications, and Maintenance Staff Guidelines. Cost-effective measures to contain pollutants from nonpoint sources are a part of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project. Permanent control measures, including design-based erosion protection and control, landscaping activities, and hydraulic improvements, among others, are designed to protect and enhance the water quality of receiving water bodies.

Caltrans will require from its contractors a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and a Water Pollution Control Plan containing erosion control measures such as soil stabilization practices and sediment control practices, including silt fences, inlet protection and check dams as necessary. Best Management Practices will be required including sediment tracking control practices, wind erosion control practices, non-storm water management, and waste management and disposal control measures. Additional water quality, erosion, and hazardous waste provisions, to avoid contaminating waterways or groundwater, may also be required in the construction contract and/or in Caltrans Standard Specifications and special provisions.

Analysis of the available data and the proposed widening alternatives suggests that the increase of pollutant loading will be minimal due to the proposed freeway widening activities. It is not expected that there will be a net increase in the quantity or net decrease in the quality of surface runoff.

None of the proposed alternatives will affect a principal or sole-supply aquifer, designated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, or affect a wellhead protection area authorized under the 1996 Amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act. There are no sensitive water resources such as water supply reservoirs, ground recharge areas, or high quality streams that will be affected by the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project.

Coastal Zone

The Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project will affect land and water within the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) jurisdiction at Corte Madera Creek, see Section 3.10, "Coastal Zone," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. There are both permanent impacts (fill and shading) which are mitigated to the extent practicable or returned to preconstruction conditions and there are temporary impacts (construction trestles, barges and access restrictions).

Construction trestles provide access to work sites for workers, equipment and construction materials within BCDC jurisdiction. Construction activities placing temporary piling in Corte Madera Creek will be limited to a construction window during the dry season to avoid impacting spawning species.

Barges may be used to transport workers, equipment and construction materials to the site. These barges will not be allowed to rest on Bay Mud and will not have access to shallow areas outside of the deeper channel. No dredging will be permitted on this project.

Heavy equipment and other construction activities will occur within BCDC jurisdiction on the Corte Madera Creek shoreline adjacent to the bridge and to the construction trestles. These activities will not impact the tidal wetlands or the adjacent isolated wetlands at Corte Madera Creek. The affected uplands will be returned to their existing condition at the completion of the project.

Other temporary impacts may include limiting public access to some areas along Corte Madera Creek adjacent to the bridge and temporarily closing the pedestrian and bike lane on the west side of the southbound on-ramp from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Alternate routes will be provided for pedestrians and bicyclists with no loss of continuity.

Caltrans has consulted with BCDC on the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project for several years. This coordination has resulted in BCDC providing a preliminary consistency determination for this project, see BCDC's letter in Appendix C of the *FEIS/R*. Caltrans is working on a plan to permanently enhance public and bicycle access to Corte Madera Creek to offset any interruption of public access, especially the temporary closing of one of the bike lanes over the bridge. Caltrans will strive to ensure that the activities of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project in BCDC jurisdiction are consistent with the Commission's laws and policies.

Cultural Resources

In 1989 and again in 1999, Caltrans archaeologists and architectural historians, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have concluded that the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project will not involve or affect any sites or properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. For more information, see Section 4.11, "Cultural Resources," in the *FEIS/R*.

One archaeological site and one possible archaeological site were inventoried within the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). One additional archaeological site was inventoried adjacent to, but outside, the project APE. These three resources are identified as environmentally sensitive areas (ESA) and will have a high visibility protective barrier (e.g., flagging, fencing, etc.) established around each resource to keep construction activities out. An archaeological monitor will be on site during construction activities at the archaeological site near Mission Avenue and Irwin Street, see *the Historic Property Survey Report 1999*, referenced in Appendix E of the *FEIS/R*.

Traffic Access and Circulation

The impacts to local access and circulation patterns as a result of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative are minor. No existing through streets are permanently closed by the project and the existing access and circulation (e.g., US 101 access to Francisco Boulevard West) are improved. Temporary lane closures, detours and other construction-related effects may occur during project construction. Construction staging, Caltrans standard specified practices, and local agency policies will minimize these impacts.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative includes temporary construction-related interruptions of bicycle and pedestrian lanes at the Greenbrae Pedestrian Overcrossing and at the southbound on-ramp across Corte Madera Creek, see Section 4.17, "Temporary Effects During Construction," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. The pedestrian and bicycle facility on the east side of the Corte Madera Bridge over Corte Madera Creek will not be affected and will provide a continuous connection for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In addition, the project will change the alignment of the existing bicycle and pedestrian lane on the west side of US 101 at Puerto Suello Hill. The existing bicycle and pedestrian lane is within the state right of way and connects Lincoln Avenue and Merrydale Road. Caltrans will relocate the existing bike lane further to the west.

Residential and Business Relocation

For the construction of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative, Caltrans will acquire property on Brookdale and Lincoln Avenues for the relocation of the rail corridor to the west. The NWPR corridor is a major public transportation facility and must be relocated to a location that will provide flexibility for further highway and/or rail improvements and ensure that the rail facility will not have to be relocated again. The properties acquired at this time for relocation of the rail corridor will serve to support the future rail service such that there will not be a future need to acquire additional residential and business properties in the NWPR corridor.

In consultation with the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, a plan to replace the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWPR) corridor has been conceptually developed. The support for a commuter rail service in the US 101 corridor in Marin and Sonoma Counties, including the completion of the draft final report of the *S.M.A.R.T. Commuter Rail Implementation Plan* and the rail funding in the Governor's Transportation Congestion Relief Plan, is growing. This support for rail service necessitates that Caltrans secure the replacement right of way expeditiously, prior to the construction of the southbound HOV lane in the Brookdale and Lincoln Avenue areas. The replacement of the rail right of way will include all necessary demolition of homes and properties acquired by Caltrans.

All potential residential displacements due to construction of the southbound/reversible HOV lane would occur in San Rafael along the west side of US 101 from south of Linden Lane to north of Myrtle Lane. The widening would cause the displacement of approximately 10 single-family residences, 6 duplexes and 5 multifamily residences. The estimated number of household units displaced would be 45. Each resident will be made aware of their rights, entitlements and eligibility under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, Caltrans will provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or nonprofit organization displaced as a result of the acquisition of real property for public use. Caltrans will assist displacees in obtaining comparable replacement housing by providing current and continuing information on the availability and prices of both houses for sale and rental units that are "decent, safe and sanitary." Nonresidential displacees will receive information on comparable properties for lease or purchase.

The Relocation Payment Program will help eligible residential occupants by paying certain costs and expenses. These costs are limited to those necessary for, or incidental to, the purchase or rental of the replacement dwelling, and actual reasonable moving expenses.

There will be a loss of 220 parking spaces in the business area of Francisco Boulevard West. Replacement parking may be made available, based on final design of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project, as available properties are identified for potential use for parking.

Traffic Noise

A *Traffic Noise Impact Report* was prepared by Caltrans in June 1997 to evaluate the noise impact of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project, see Section 3.14.1, "Noise Sensitive Areas," and Section 3.14.2, "Noise Abatement Criteria," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. This report

was based on FHWA noise regulations (23 CFR 772) and Caltrans policy in assessing the noise impacts and recommending noise abatement measures to reduce impacts to acceptable levels. All National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements regarding the assessment of noise impacts were followed. Under NEPA, impacts and measures to abate adverse impacts were identified.

The existing ambient noise levels and worst-case future traffic noise levels at receptors within the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project limits were evaluated, see Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. After a detailed study with sufficient attention to the scope of the project, noise barriers were recommended. These barriers met the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Caltrans noise abatement criteria. The reasonableness and feasibility, including cost effectiveness of each noise barrier will be further evaluated as more detailed design information becomes available. Further evaluation, including input from the affected residents will occur during the final design phase. The exact dimensions, locations and aesthetics of noise barriers will also be determined during the final design phase.

Reflective Noise

There have been numerous studies of reflective noise. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, completed two parallel barrier studies during the period of October 1986 through April 1994. These studies have shown no reflection problems. In fact, there has been no data indicating any noticeable, reflective noise problems presented to Caltrans.

Two studies conducted by Caltrans in the Los Angeles community of Brentwood and along Highway 99 in south Sacramento dealt with the acoustical performance of parallel noise barriers and the possibility of noise reflection problems. These studies were performed under carefully documented "real world" conditions and showed no reflection problems. However, the studies did clearly demonstrate the profound effect of meteorological conditions on traffic noise levels. All the reflective noise studies conducted by Caltrans or others have followed all appropriate FHWA and Caltrans guidelines. The results of these studies are applicable to all locales, including San Rafael.

The studies indicate that parallel barrier sites with a width-to-height ratio of 10 or more would have a degradation of less than 3 dBA, an imperceptible noise increase over a single barrier.

Caltrans has also experimented with absorptive surfaces in District 4. A section of the retaining wall in the median along Route 580 near Park Boulevard in the City of Oakland has been treated with absorptive material. According to the noise evaluation by the consultants, the absorptive material has only provided 1-2 dBA of noise reduction.

It is Caltrans policy to avoid noise reflections through appropriate design measures, such as avoiding barrier configuration with aspect ratios less than 10:1, or if unavoidable, the choice of an appropriate barrier material, if feasible and reasonable.

Caltrans has not found nor has the agency been presented with any data regarding noise levels in the hillsides in San Rafael approaching or exceeding the 67 dBA Noise Abatement Criteria. The noise measurements taken by Caltrans in the hillsides above US 101 in Marin County have yielded noise levels below the established Noise Abatement Criteria.

In the 1980s, there was one "before and after soundwall" study in the San Rafael area adjacent to US 101. The results of this study are shown in Table 10 on page 61 in the *FEIS/R*. Noise measurements with minimal meteorological matching were taken at the same locations in 1983 and in 1988 after the construction of the soundwalls. A copy of the letter to the San Rafael

Department of Public Works, summarizing the results of this study, is available and will be provided to interested parties upon request.

Caltrans and the Marin Congestion Management Agency have committed to further evaluate the reflective noise issue. At the request of the Marin County Congestion Management Agency (Marin CMA), additional areas, specifically the hillsides, will be evaluated for possible reflective noise. This evaluation will refine the design of the newly proposed noise barriers on US 101 and address possible reflected noise at homes on the hillsides above and behind the noise barriers. The noise consultant will be asked to explore every possibility for noise abatement including, but not limited to: selection of sound absorbing materials; new noise barriers, if warranted; modified noise barrier designs; as well as extensive landscaping. Noise barrier locations and designs will need to be considered for cost-effectiveness, will need to provide tangible benefits, and must be feasible to engineer.

Draft Scope of Work for the Upcoming Noise Evaluation:

Numerous meetings have been held with Marin Congestion Management Agency (CMA), Mr. Bob Cooper, Mr. Patrick Murphy, Mr. Simon Palmer and other representatives from the public to discuss and finalize the Scope of Work. The following tasks are included in the Draft Scope of Work that has not been finalized yet:

Task 1. Conduct Project Design and Planning

The Consultant will coordinate and plan the noise and meteorological measurements with the affected parties, including project subconsultants, Caltrans, and the community in San Rafael. This will include a field visit to review and observe the project area and the proposed measurement sites. Recommendations regarding alternative sites to avoid redundancy will be made.

Task 2. Conduct Long-Term Measurements

The consultant will conduct a series of long-term measurements at a total of 13 sites in the project area. Three measurement positions will be located in the Greenbrae area west of SR 101 between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Andersen Drive. Ten measurement positions will be located in San Rafael area on both sides of the highway between Mission Avenue and Hammondale Court.

In addition long-term measurements will be taken at a single reference position above the existing sound wall simultaneously with the long-term positions in the neighborhood. Long-term monitoring will be conducted at each site 24 hours a day for a 7-day period. Monitoring will be conducted at 6 to 7 sites at a time. Meteorological data will also be collected simultaneously with collection of sound level data by the meteorological consultant.

Task 3. Conduct Short-Term Baseline Measurements

Caltrans desires to quantify the effect of treatments to reduce traffic noise in the area. To do this a series of short-term sound levels measurements with simultaneous traffic counts and average speed determinations will be conducted prior to the implementation of any treatments. The measurements will serve as the baseline against which subsequent short-term measurements will be compared. Short-term sound level measurements will be conducted at 5 selected locations in the San Rafael area described above and three locations in the Greenbrae area described above.

Along with simultaneous sound level measurements at a reference microphone located above the existing sound wall, data will be collected for a two-hour period during the day and a two-hour period during the evening at each position. Traffic will be videotaped simultaneously with the

sound level measurements. The videotape will be used to subsequently count and classify vehicles and to determine average speed during the sound level measurements. The short-term measurement positions may include long-term sites but will focus on locations close to the highway (i.e. within 66 meters or 200 feet) to minimize the effects of meteorology changes.

Meteorological data will also be collected at one position simultaneously with collection of sound level data by the meteorological consultant

Task 4. Conduct Long-Term Measurement Data Analysis.

The consultant will follow up the long-term measurement program by analyzing the measured data and building an automated spreadsheet to process data from the noise monitors into forms appropriate to include in a report.

Task 5. Prepare Draft Measurement Report.

The consultant will prepare a draft report summarizing hourly energy equivalent sound level (Leq) results of the long-term noise measurement and the meteorological measurements. Tables and graphs of the appropriate data will be provided. The consultant will meet with Caltrans, the CMA, and representatives of the neighborhood committee to review and discuss the information presented in the draft report.

Task 6. Prepare Revised Draft Measurement Report

After receiving comments from Caltrans, the CMA, and representatives of the neighborhood committee the consultant will prepare a revised draft report incorporating revisions requested in the comments. The consultant will meet with Caltrans, the CMA, and representatives of the neighborhood committee to review and discuss the information presented in the revised draft report.

Task 7. Prepare Final Measurement Report

After receiving comments from Caltrans, the CMA, and representatives of the neighborhood committee the consultant will prepare a final report incorporating revisions requested in the comments. The consultant will meet with Caltrans, the CMA, and representatives of the neighborhood committee to review and discuss the information presented in the final report.

Task 8. Conduct Follow-Up Short-Term Measurements

In order to assess the effects of potential treatments to reduce noise, a series of short-term measurements will be taken in the San Rafael and Greenbrae areas. In the San Rafael area measurements will be taken after each of the following construction phases:

- after removal of the existing southbound sound wall at station 615+00 to 652+00,
- after construction of the new sound wall to replace the existing sound wall (sound wall S633 as identified in the *Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project FEIS/R*),
- after construction of the new walls S655 and S661,
- after widening of the highway,
- after placement of open-grade asphalt (if implemented on the project),
- after acoustical absorption treatment of the existing sound wall (if implemented)

In the Greenbrae area measurements will be taken after construction of sound wall S493 only.

These short-term sound level measurements will be taken at the same locations as conducted under Task 5 along with simultaneous sound level measurements at a reference microphone.

Data will be collected for a two-hour period during the day and a two-hour period during the evening at each position. Traffic will be videotaped simultaneously with the sound level measurements. The videotape will be used to subsequently count and classify vehicles and to determine average speed during the sound level measurements.

Meteorological data will also be collected at one position simultaneously with collection of sound level data by the meteorological consultant.

Task 9. Reduce and Evaluate Short-Term Data

All of the short-term data will be reduced and evaluated. The sound level data will be normalized based on the traffic counts using the FHWA Traffic Noise Model and an assessment as to the effects of each of the events identified in Task 8 will be made.

Task 10. Prepare Draft Report on Short-Term Measurements

The consultant will prepare a draft report summarizing the results of the short-term monitoring and the assessment of the effects of each construction phase identified in Task 8.

Task 11. Prepare Final Report on Short-Term Measurements

The consultant will prepare a final report incorporating revisions requested in the comments.

Task 12. Prepare Summary of Available Sound Wall Absorption Treatments

The consultant will prepare a summary report identifying treatments available to add acoustical absorption to existing sound walls and means for providing acoustical absorption for new sound wall construction.

Visual Environment

The most visually sensitive areas affected by the proposed project would be residential neighborhoods, commercial developments, and existing planting both within and outside the highway right of way.

The removal of existing residential homes and highway planting, combined with a reduced separation between the highway right of way and adjacent structures, would increase the visual prominence of the proposed freeway facilities and may affect the visual integrity of existing residential communities. Homes removed along the east side of Brookdale Avenue would be replaced with landscaping and the mature row of street trees on the east side of Brookdale Avenue will be preserved.

Widening to the west between the US 101/I-580 Interchange and the central San Rafael Viaduct will move Francisco Boulevard West and US 101 closer to the fronts of adjacent businesses. The loss of front setback from the street, the loss of landscaping along the front of property and the increased proximity to Francisco Boulevard West and US 101 would reduce visual quality. Planned improvements to enhance the visual quality within the area include:

- providing a planting strip along the highway,
- undergrounding the overhead utilities, and
- an aesthetically pleasing replacement for the existing glare screen.

Positive visual impacts for freeway motorists would result from relocation of noise barriers westward reducing the tunnel effect created by the barriers. Increased space between the new shoulder and relocated noise barrier south of Lincoln Avenue will allow for landscaping.

Planting of trees and shrubs in this area will help to soften and reduce the singular plane surface of the noise barriers and maintain planting continuity throughout the corridor.

Temporary Construction

In addition, to the above impacts and mitigation, the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project includes widening, grading, pile driving, bridge construction, demolition, paving, and other roadway, structure and marine construction activities that have potential temporary impacts on the environment. Adverse impacts due to construction activities will be avoided, minimized, or rectified by a combination of Caltrans standard specifications and procedures for construction and by additional conditions supplied by permitting and regulatory agencies.

Air pollution during construction includes equipment emissions and exhaust from construction equipment and other vehicles, odors from construction materials, wind blown dust from grading and hauling, etc. These effects are temporary and localized. Construction equipment emissions are accounted for in the regional air quality plan and the contractor is required by Caltrans Standard Specifications and special provisions to meet the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and other applicable emission control rules for construction equipment that may be in effect at the time of construction.

Wind blown dust and particulate matter is another major contaminant of construction-generated air pollution. Sufficient watering activities will be required to accompany dust-generating construction activities. Caltrans Standard Specifications and special provisions include these provisions, and all applicable (e.g., AQMD) air quality control rules also apply.

Noise is a natural component of major construction activities. Noise generated by grading equipment, other heavy construction machinery, and/or pile-driving activities can negatively affect nearby residents and businesses. However, the noise impacts will be relatively temporary due to the staging and to the overall length of the project. Whenever possible, work will be scheduled for weekday hours. Contractors will be required to comply with local noise ordinances. Caltrans also includes noise control requirements to limit noise impacts on area residents from construction operations in the project special provisions.

Construction activities have the potential to pollute nearby water resources by leaking or spilled chemicals, storm water runoff, erosion, etc. A Regional Water Quality Control Board Certification/Waiver will be required. Cost-effective measures are required to contain pollutants from nonpoint sources through the use of available nonpoint pollution control practices, technologies and operating methods.

Caltrans will require from its contractors a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan or a Water Pollution Control Plan containing erosion control measures such as soil stabilization practices and sediment control practices, including silt fences, inlet protection and check dams as necessary. Best Management Practices will be required including sediment tracking control practices, wind erosion control practices, non-storm water management and disposal control measures. Additional water quality, erosion, and hazardous waste provisions, to avoid contaminating waterways or groundwater, may also be required in the construction contract and/or in the Standard Specifications and special provisions.

Construction activities on US 101 and on adjacent streets may temporarily cause congestion and delays. Lane closures and detours will be restricted to off-peak periods whenever possible. Lane closures may occur during night hours for a limited duration. Caltrans requires that the freeway always remain open.

There are temporary construction impacts to the Corte Madera Creek area associated with pile driving and with the construction of the widened bridge sections. These include temporary

construction trestles, barges in Corte Madera Creek and heavy equipment activities on the adjacent shoreline. Construction trestles will provide access to work sites. Construction activities and temporary fills in Corte Madera Creek will be limited to a construction window during the dry season from June 1st to October 15th to avoid impacting spawning species. Barges may be used to transport workers, equipment and construction materials to the site. These barges will not be allowed to rest on Bay Mud and will not have access to shallow areas outside of the deeper channel. No dredging will be permitted on this project.

Heavy equipment and other construction activities on the shoreline adjacent to the bridge may impact upland areas. These activities will not be allowed in the tidal wetlands nor in the adjacent isolated wetlands at Corte Madera Creek, see Section 4.6.4, "Mitigation Plans" in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*. The affected uplands will be returned to their existing condition at the completion of the project.

Improved freeway operations and safety is one of the stated goals of the proposed project. All proposed improvements, roadway changes, maintenance work and construction activities must meet high safety standards. Special provisions require safety plans and regular safety meetings for workers. The safety of drivers on the freeway is the foremost concern of Caltrans operations, maintenance and design members. Safety is a key component in the purpose and construction of highway projects.

AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY

The *Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)* evaluated the potential air quality impacts of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative on local and regional air quality and established project conformity with the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments (FCAA).

Regional conformity with the *State Implementation Plan (SIP)* is evaluated by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) during approval of projects for the *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* and the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*.

Project-level (local) compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) is determined by analysis of the potential concentration of air pollutants at local receptors; e.g., the potential carbon monoxide (CO) level at a local intersection.

The San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin has been designated as a maintenance area for carbon monoxide (CO) and a non-attainment area for ozone. For PM₁₀, the area is undesignated for federal standards and non-attainment for state standards. The Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Project is included in the 1998 conforming *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* and the 1998 *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. The current project design concept and scope are essentially the same as the design concept and scope in the *RTP* and *RTIP* listings. The project, as described in the *RTP* and *RTIP*, conforms to the *State Implementation Plan (SIP)*. All applicable transportation control measures, including HOV lanes, as stated in the *SIP* are included in the project. Both phases of the project therefore meet the regional tests for conformity with the *State Implementation Plan*.

MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY

An analysis for a Major Investment Study (MIS) was prepared as a required element for all major transportation improvements that have federal funding, as outlined in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project had extensive alternative analyses prior to this requirement and was considered

to be a "pipeline" project by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in 1995. The project fulfills the requirements of both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance for "pipeline" projects and the MTC Project Screening Criteria, which state that the screening criteria for pipeline projects fulfill the requirement for a major investment study. See Chapter 7, "Major Investment Study," in Volume I of the *FEIS/R*.

COMMENTS ON THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/REPORT

The *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/R)* for the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project was circulated to elected officials, governmental agencies, organizations, and the public on February 4, 2000, and its availability was published in the February 18, 2000, Federal Register. The 30-day public comment period ended on March 20, 2000.

As part of this Record of Decision, comments on the *FEIS/R* received during the public comment period in February and March 2000 and the responses to these comments are included as an attachment to this Record of Decision and, by this reference, made a part of this Record of Decision. Twenty-five individuals and groups submitted a total of approximately 330 comments on the *FEIS/R*. Copies of the comment letters (and in one case a 120-page booklet) are on file and available for review at the Caltrans District 4 Office, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland.

CONCLUSION

Input from agencies and the public has greatly influenced this process and greatly influenced the selection of alternatives considered by the *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report*.

Based on a systematic, interdisciplinary approach, including studying the potential project alternatives, evaluating the environmental issues and timely public outreach, and after careful consideration of all of the social, economic, and environmental evaluations contained in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report* along with input from agencies, organizations and the public, and the project features and commitments as outlined above, it is the decision of the Federal Highway Administration to approve the selection of the Southbound/Reversible HOV Lane Gap Closure Alternative as described above. This Record of Decision will permit Caltrans to proceed with the design of the project.

RECORD OF DECISION APPROVAL

August 31, 2000
Date

/s/David A. Nicol for
Michael G. Ritchie
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration