



5.1 Project Development Process

Community involvement is an integral part of the project development process. Once themes have been identified, local and State officials can prioritize, program, and develop proposed projects.

Community themes, in collaboration with the concepts set forth in this Master Plan and the Route 99 Corridor Theme, should express the corridor’s unique character. Specific colors, textures, and planting material can be used to express community themes to highway travelers.

One benefit of this Master Plan is that many theme or aesthetic features can be included at the project planning stage, thereby causing minimum affect on cost and schedule. Aesthetic features may include textured paving added to extended gores and concrete bridge slopes, retaining walls, soundwall and bridge textures, and pedestrian fence treatments and lighting. Features such as enhanced planting, gateway monuments, community identifiers, and highway art may be added with community contributions and maintenance agreements. Section 5.4 shows illustrative examples of aesthetic features that can be implemented

Community involvement is an integral part of the project development process. Once themes have been identified, local and State officials can prioritize, program, and develop proposed projects. Caltrans’ project development philosophy is to consider economic, social, and environmental effects in project decisions.

The project development process usually begins after a transportation need has been identified. The project initiation document starts the process leading to programming of funds. Figure 5.1 delineates the Project Development Process.

The project development process spans that period of time that begins with the Project Initiation Document (PID) which sets project scope, cost and schedule, and ends with the completion of construction. The project development process is tied to the legal requirements of environmental laws and regulations, and it melds engineering requirements with local and regional plans along with community values.

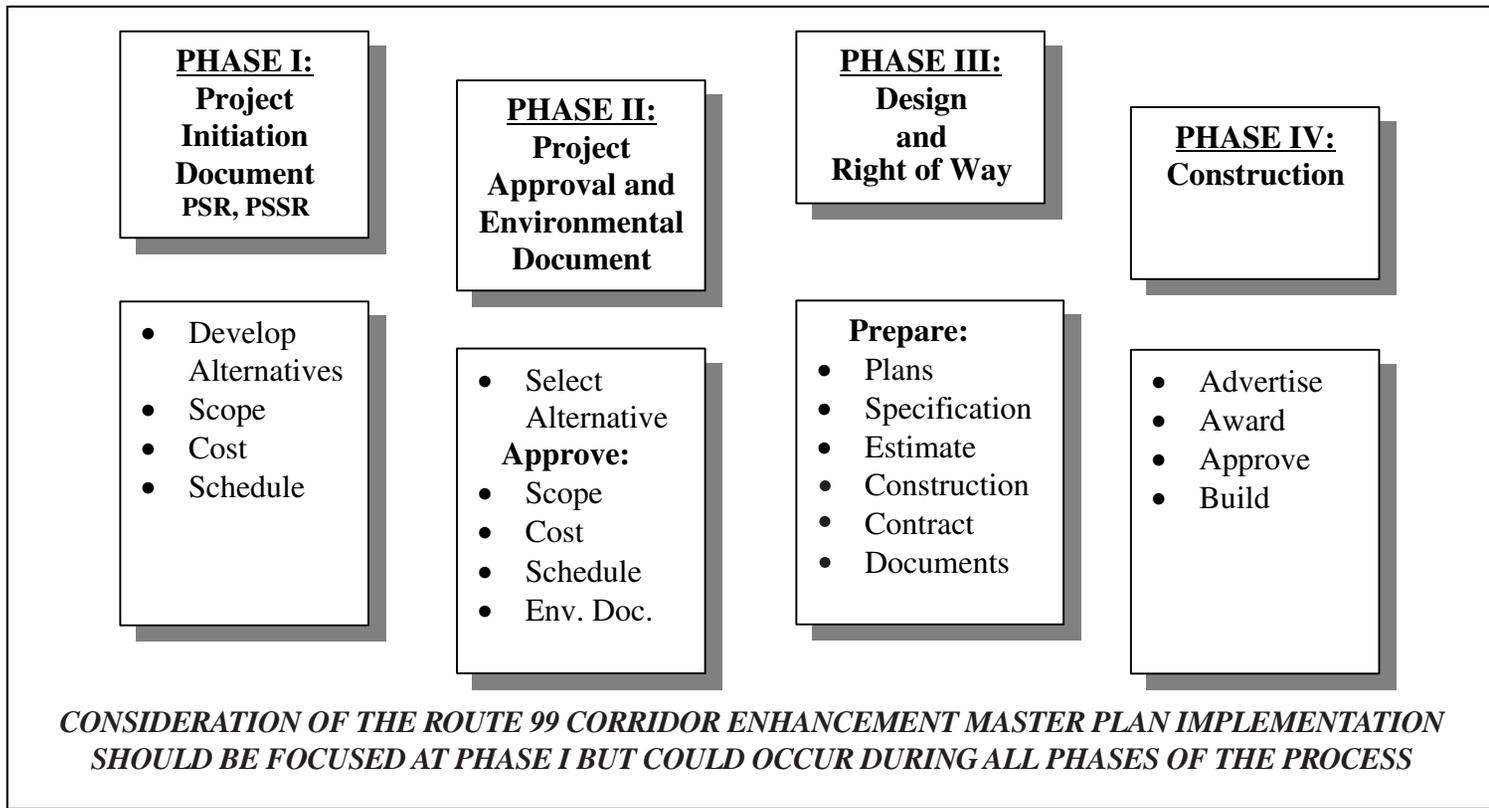
Consideration of the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan principles should occur during all phases of the project development process. Early involvement is essential to implement aesthetic elements on roadway projects. Having a local corridor enhancement plan already in place is of great value during the project initiation process.

Early involvement is essential to implement aesthetic elements in roadway projects

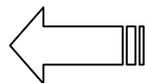


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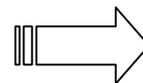
Project Development Process



Easy



CHANGE



Difficult

Figure 5-1



I M P L E M E N T I N G T H E P L A N

5.1.1 Phase I: Project Initiation

Within the Project Initiation Document (PID) will either be a Project Study Report (PSR) for added travel capacity projects, or a Project Scope Summary Report (PSSR) for roadway rehabilitation and operational projects. A Caltrans approved PID is required before State and Federal funds can be committed (programmed) for a State highway project.

The PSR and PSSR are reports that document the purpose and need for an improvement, identify alternatives, and set the schedule and estimated cost of the project. Once the document has been approved, the project can be submitted for programming of funds.

To properly scope aesthetic elements of interest to a community, a community corridor beautification plan should be developed so it can be referenced by this Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan. The Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan will track existing and add new plans as they are completed. It will also aid roadway designers in preparation of the scope of a PID.

Funding Programs

Programming is the process by which a public agency or a private company identifies specific funds for a project, based on a projection of revenues expected to be available at a specific time in the future.

Most State and Federal revenues are programmed into the following documents:

- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP)

Caltrans, MPO's, local agencies, and the California Transportation Commission all have a role in developing these documents. Local agencies program their projects through a variety of documents; when their projects involve State highway work, funding may be derived from a number of sources. Funding sources may include, but are not limited to:

- Congestion Management and Air Quality Program funds
- STIP
- SHOPP
- Transportation Enhancement (TE)
- Local Sales-Tax Measure
- Local funds
- Developer funds

Features such as enhanced planting, gateway monuments, community identifiers, and highway art may be funded under Transportation Enhancement or local funds. In addition, Maintenance Agreements will usually be required as State forces will not always be able to maintain these facilities.



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5.1.2 Phase II: Project Approval and Environmental Document

Selection of the Preferred Alternative authorizes final engineering of the design to begin. The Project Report (PR) documents Caltrans' approval for most types of State highway projects. This includes new facilities, as well as improvements, modifications, or repairs to existing facilities - whether done by Caltrans or by others under a Caltrans encroachment permit. "Project Approval" means approval by Caltrans, and where required, approval by the Federal Highways Administration and the California Transportation Commission.

An environmental document is prepared to assure that the project complies with state and federal environmental laws. All project activities such as the development of project alternatives, public input, and selection of the Preferred Alternative are discussed in the Final Environmental Document (FED).

Selection of the Preferred Alternative occurs only after specific effects and reasonable mitigation measures have been identified for each alternative. The selection is made after all comments are received, from circulation of the Draft Environmental Document (DED) for public comment and from the public hearing process. These comments and the rationale for selecting the alternative are detailed in the Final Environmental Document and summarized in the Project Report.

It is very difficult to change the scope of the project once the Project Report has been approved. Changes to the project may cause a re-evaluation of the environmental document and require additional funds. Such changes may result in the demise of the project. Items such as aesthetic features would likely not be added after this phase if it meant that the project would be delayed, canceled, or the cost increased.

5.1.3 Phase III: Design and Right-of-Way

The design and right-of-way-phase involves the preparation of Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) for the construction of a transportation improvement project and acquiring necessary right-of-way. Project design is initiated by obtaining project approval through the Project Report. Because the development of estimates and final design alternatives is required for project approval, a significant portion of the project design is often completed prior to the formal initiation of the design phase. These activities are known as preliminary engineering.

The responsibilities during this phase of the project development process include the following:

- Prepare quality plans that meet Caltrans standards, practices, and policies.
- Prepare project cost estimates and monitor costs to keep the project within budget.
- Purchase right-of-way if needed.



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- Monitor the project scope to ensure consistency with previous approvals.
- Prepare final construction contract documents.

5.1.4 Phase IV: Construction

Advertising the construction contract is the first step in the construction phase. The contract is awarded to the lowest qualified bidder, provided that all procedures and legal requirements have been fulfilled. The contract is then approved and the contractor is notified and the start of actual construction soon follows. Once the contract has been approved, there will be limited changes to the project. Upon completion of construction, the Resident Engineer (RE) recommends acceptance of the contract. With the exception of enhanced planting, gateway monuments, community identifiers and highway art, maintenance of the facility typically reverts back to Caltrans following contract acceptance.

Local agency officials are continuously involved in the process, particularly for those projects financed or constructed by the local agencies. However, acceptance rests with the State for the portion of the project that is within the State right-of-way. When the contract includes work on local agency facilities, the local agency officials must be involved in the acceptance reviews.

5.2 Public Involvement Process

5.2.1 Local Involvement

The purpose of public involvement is to develop projects which both respond to transportation needs and consider community interests. Community interests include individuals, businesses, associations, other officials, and institutions that may be affected by a project.

Existing community organizations provide an effective avenue for communicating with large numbers of people. Community organizations may include churches, service groups, fraternal organizations, business groups, civic and neighborhood associations, advocacy groups for the disabled, and professional and trade organizations.

It is during the PID phase that Caltrans and local communities should work together in implementing proposed aesthetic features. Collaborative meetings should continue during the design process to address issues related to funding, design exceptions, and cooperative agreements. A local agency may wish to improve the appearance of the roadside by funding and maintaining sections of State right-of-way. Local participation may be either financial, or in the form of services, materials and equipment or a combination thereof.



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WHO TO CONTACT?

A: For a question about a landscape project on Route 99, or to initiate the process for landscaping, please contact the Caltrans Landscape Architects (1 or 2) below.

B: For a general question about any Route 99 project, contact the Caltrans Public Information Office (3 or 4) below.

C: For questions about funding for a Route 99 project, or how to voice your opinion on a project, contact the respective Metropolitan Planning Organization (5) below.

CALTRANS

1. Lori Butler, District 6 Landscape Architect-Fresno Office:
Kern, Tulare, Fresno, and Madera Counties Phone: (559) 230-3134
2. Elbert Cox, District 10 Landscape Architect-Stockton Office:
Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin Counties Phone: (559) 230-3146
3. Andrew Rodriguez, Caltrans Public Information Office-Fresno Office:
Phone: (559) 488-4067
4. Zelig Nogueira, Caltrans Public Information Office-Stockton Office:
Phone: (209) 948-3930

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

5. Kern Council of Governments: (661) 861-2191
- Tulare County Association of Governments: (559) 733-6291
- Council of Fresno County Governments: (559) 233-4148
- Madera County Association of Governments: (559) 675-0721
- Merced County Association of Governments: (209) 723-3153
- Stanislaus Council of Governments: (209) 558-7830
- San Joaquin Council of Governments: (209) 468-3913



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5.2.2 Public Meetings

The initial meeting is held with affected local agencies or their technical and planning staffs, along with other interested or affected groups. The meeting may be combined with the scoping meeting during the PID Phase for projects involving an EIS. The meeting is open to the general public. It should be well publicized. The initial meeting provides an early exchange of information and ideas, as well as an opportunity to discuss the proposed project timetable.

5.2.3 Beautification Committees

Beautification Committees are usually made up of representatives of various citizen groups, business owners, and agencies of various levels of government interested in improving community attractiveness. They are distinctly different from technical advisory committees, in that their task is to express community opinion and concerns, not to provide particularly technical expertise. Beautification Committees may consist of representatives from a single community, the entire county, or the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Examples of committees actively working on Route 99:

- **Fresno County - The Association for the Beautification of Highway 99-** This group is a steering committee made up of private and public sector members from all five jurisdictions (Fresno County and the four cities) along the Fresno

County 99 corridor, as well as Caltrans and the Council of Fresno County Governments. The first product produced by this association was the “Highway 99 Beautification Master Plan” for the County. This Master Plan was developed by a consultant landscape architecture firm, and completed in July of 2000. The implementation of the plan is an ongoing effort for the association.

- **Bakersfield Freeway Beautification Advisory Committee -** This group is comprised of private and public sector members, the City of Bakersfield, and Caltrans. The focus of this effort is the Route 99 Corridor, with Routes 58 and 178 included as well. A consultant landscape architecture firm developed this Master Plan.
- **Stanislaus County - Route 99 Image Enhancement Plan Implementation Project Team-** This group is made up of private and public sector members from communities along the Stanislaus County 99 corridor, as well as Caltrans and the Stanislaus Council of Governments. This plan is being developed in part by a consultant landscape architecture firm.
- **Stockton Beautiful -** Efforts for this group include the 99 Corridor through town.
- **The Great Valley Center -** A Highway 99 Task Force has been organized and is developing a cohesive approach to transform the Highway 99 corridor into a “Main Street of the San Joaquin Valley.” The limits of the project stretch from Kern County to San Joaquin County.



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5.2.4 Getting Your Ideas Considered --a “How to Guide”

One of the key facets leading to an enhanced Route 99 corridor is obtaining ideas and proposals from a broad spectrum of constituents along the corridor. Often interested people or organizations would like to offer ideas but do not know what to do, how to get involved or where to submit those ideas. This section provides a simple “how to guide” for getting ideas considered.

Any of the Caltrans individuals listed in Section 5.2.1 can be contacted to receive an idea or proposal. To avoid the perception of unauthorized responsibility, it is the policy of the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee not to formally accept for review any proposal that has not first been submitted to the entity with ultimate decision authority.

Suggested Action Steps:

1. Think your idea or proposal through.
 - Include the name, phone number and or email address of the proposal contact person.
 - Include a concise but effective description.
 - Does it fit with city, county or corridor identity or theme?
 - Is it part of an approved plan or program?
 - Why is this idea or proposal good for transportation or the community?
2. Identify the entity with decision authority.
 - If known, identify the agency with decision authority.
 - If known, list the name and phone number of the person for the agency.
 - If unknown, the Caltrans individuals listed in Section 5.2.1 can be contacted for assistance.
3. Either contact or submit your proposal to the entity with decision authority.
 - The Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee will not initiate a review without prior submittal of the proposal to the entity with decision authority.
4. Meet with the entity with decision authority to present your proposal.
 - Discuss your proposal with the entity.
 - Changes may have to be made to the proposal so it can be acceptable.
 - If the entity with decision authority supports the concept of your proposal, it can then be submitted to the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee for review for consistency with the Master Plan.
 - If the proposal is not supported by the entity with decision authority, the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee will not review the proposal.



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5. What do you do if Caltrans is the entity with decision authority?

- Contact one of the Caltrans representatives listed in Section 5.2.2 in this report. That person will put you in contact with the appropriate Caltrans specialist.
- Meet with the Caltrans specialist to discuss details and the purpose for your proposal.
- Describe any special funding or services that you can offer.
- Caltrans can tell you whether or not your proposal is something it can accommodate or whether modifications are necessary.
- If your proposal is not allowable, even with modifications, Caltrans will explain why and it will have to be dropped.
- If your proposal has potential, Caltrans will proceed with the necessary steps leading to implementation either by inclusion in a related project under development or as a separate project.
- If Caltrans determines your project has potential, Caltrans will submit it to the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee for review for consistency with the Master Plan.

6. You may want request an opportunity to discuss your proposal with the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Master Plan Advisory Committee when it goes to it for review.

5.3 Case Studies

The State is allotted a finite amount of funding for landscape projects. It is with this funding that Landscape Architects have to accomplish the following:

- Cover the roadside within the project limits with a variety of trees, shrubs and ground covers.
- Provide associated irrigation systems with Remote Irrigation Control System.
- Provide gore paving.
- Install booster pumps and associated electrical systems.
- Install access gates, vehicle access pads and other associated components designed to increase maintenance personnel safety.
- Provide erosion control and permanent storm water control measures.

Following are three (3) case studies for beautification along Route 99: one each in Bakersfield, Fresno County and Stanislaus County. These case studies are examples of approaches toward developing beautification plans.



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5.3.1 Bakersfield

The principal purpose of Bakersfield's Freeway Beautification Master Plan and Design Guidelines is to provide a long-range strategy for improving aesthetics and ambience of the principal arrival gateways and transportation corridors within Metropolitan Bakersfield, and to enhance the image of the City for residents, businesses and travelers.

The Freeway Beautification Master Plan and Design Guidelines:

- Define the study area.
- Inventory existing conditions along the freeway right-of-way and key land used along highways.
- Categorize opportunities and constraints.
- Formulate goals and objectives.
- Develop corridor development guidelines and schematic landscape architectural master plans.
- Portray unified community design themes, criteria, and standards.
- Create significant gateway landscaping theme elements at points of entry.
- Identify and screen views of incompatible adjacent land uses.
- Identify windows of opportunity to preserve scenic vistas or accentuate key features along the freeway corridors.

Bakersfield's Master Plan recommends that the landscape design heavily reflect the surrounding agriculture. Shrubs and ground-

covers are to be massed in a linear fashion to emulate the striped nature of agricultural row crops. Large amounts of hardscape were proposed to reduce maintenance in narrow areas. Bakersfield had identified the Kern River as the primary influence. They wanted designs to reflect and emulate this natural feature.

Caltrans' Landscape Architects used this information in a Landscape Rehabilitation project that stretched from California Ave to the 204/99 interchange. Meshing this information with the theme put forth in the Route 99 Corridor Enhancement Plan ("Route 99, -The Main Street of California's heartland,- linking heritage to innovation"), the Landscape Architects assembled a design that harmonized with the city desires and the Corridor Theme. To avoid requiring a maintenance agreement between the City and the State, the Landscape Architects simplified the planting arrangement in areas that would be difficult to maintain and added detail to areas with good access.

The resulting design emulates a river; formal planting was added in areas that would function as entryways. Native plant material was almost exclusively used adjacent to the river to blend the highway into the viewshed of the river trail user. Colored, stamped concrete in ramp gore areas was proposed to aid in reducing maintenance exposure to traffic. Tall evergreen trees were proposed to screen industrial facilities adjacent to the highway, while views to the river were left open.



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The City of Bakersfield clearly outlined the desire to enhance the prominence of Kern River through landscape elements within the highway corridor. The highway beautification master plan delineates areas of importance and significant community elements adjacent to the highway. These elements were also emulated within the States' right of way.

On and off ramps host a variety of planting that emulates entry-way monumentation. These elements mirror or enhance existing elements outside the States' right of way.

5.3.2 Fresno County

In 1998 an informal grassroots committee called "99 in 99" began meeting to discuss strategies for cleaning up Highway 99. It consisted of business leaders, community activists, elected officials, local citizens, and public agency staff. It was recognized that a Highway 99 Beautification Master Plan was needed as the first step to improve the image of Highway 99, and to help attract economic development and tourism.

That fall the committee was formalized as *The Association for the Beautification of Highway 99*. Each city along the corridor (Kingsburg, Selma, Fowler, and Fresno), and the County passed resolutions forming the Association. Each jurisdiction has two representatives, one from the private sector, and one elected official. Caltrans also participates as a member of the Association.

The Council of Fresno County Governments (Fresno COG) agreed to provide staff support to the group. The Association has no formal powers but serves as an advisory and steering committee. Tasks that the COG's staff performs include arranging meetings, creating agendas, sending correspondence, and providing recommendations and advice.

In the spring of 1999, the Association and the Council of Fresno County Governments took on the challenge of developing the "Highway 99 Beautification Master Plan". This was one of the Association's first actions COG agreed to fund the plan and provide the necessary staff time. The Association retained a consultant to assist them in the preparation of the plan, and the document was completed in July of 2000.

The general purpose of the Beautification Master Plan was to develop a long-range plan for improving the aesthetics of the Route 99 corridor, including both state right-of-way and adjacent lands through Fresno County. The main goal as stated in the plan is to "*Create within 10 years, an image for the Highway 99 corridor through Fresno County, that communicates to the traveling public the agricultural significance, economic strength, scenic beauty, and community spirit of our region.*"

Numerous aesthetic accoutrements have been implemented along the corridor in the Fresno area as a result of the Highway 99 Master Plan. An earth tone red color theme has been established. Travelers passing through Fresno are offered aesthetic treatments



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which include; colored gore paving at interchange ramps, a horizontal earth tone red stripe on all bridges, red slope paving on the side of the freeway below bridge structures, special “arch design” protective fencing on bridge structures above the freeway, locally designed murals, a gateway monument at the northern Fresno County Line, as well as enhanced landscaping. All of these features, as a composite, offer the traveler a pleasing experience and a feeling that Fresno cares about its community.

The Fresno Mural program is a particularly innovative effort, initiated originally by the Fresno Rotary Club. It has been a model for a very successful public-private partnership between the Service Clubs, School Districts, citizen volunteers, City of Fresno, County of Fresno, Council of Fresno County Governments, and Caltrans. The Rotary Club generated the funding, while Fresno area schools held student design contests for the artwork. Students constructed the ceramic mosaic after a contractor built the pedestal and frame. Mural artwork portrays regional cultural, historic and scenic attractions. Murals are now located throughout the Fresno Metropolitan freeway system, not just along Route 99.

5.3.3 Stanislaus County

The Route 99 Enhancement Plan Implementation Project (PIP) Team was established to address the condition and aesthetic treatment along Stanislaus County’s “Main Street”. Members of the team are comprised of the communities of Ceres, Turlock, Modesto, special districts, Stanislaus County staff, elected officials, city staff, Caltrans personnel, and StanCOG staff. The PIP Team effort is currently in progress and will continue through out 2004 and 2005.

The PIP Team is designed to include as many groups or individuals as are interested in improving the image of Stanislaus County, with special attention along the Route 99 corridor. The goal of the Route 99 Enhancement PIP Team is to develop a Master Plan that will address the concerns of the various jurisdictions. The PIP Team has also recognized the need to support the Master Plan by establishing a Monitoring Team that will serve on an as-needed basis to assist in implementing the Master Plan after adoption.

The PIP Team is striving to complete a Master Plan that will present a positive picture of Stanislaus County and provide a framework to address conditions along Route 99. It is to be a “living” document that can be adopted by the various governmental entities along the corridor in order to form a consistent theme for Route 99 through Stanislaus County. It is proposed that the Master Plan will assist in the development of a resource guideline, which will be used as a template when establishing various zoning and development standards within each jurisdiction along the corridor.



I M P L E M E N T I N G T H E P L A N

Members of the PIP Team have completed the following:

- Completed an inventory of conditions as they exist at this point.
- Considered some strategies to address the current situation.
- Developed an action plan and timeline to complete the Master Plan.
- Established sub-teams to address various aspects of the Plan.

The following sub-teams have been established:

- Planning/Design Issues Team is researching local planning efforts, and Zoning & Ordinance issues, developing comprehensive Overlay Zone Model Ordinance, analyzing opportunities and constraints, preparing concepts for typical conditions, developing design guidelines, community signage and image ideas, and indentifying solutions for specific sites.
- Demonstration Project Team will develop promotional information, identify potential projects, contact property owners, and plan and implement demonstration projects.
- Operational Issues Team will prepare maintenance guidelines, and enforcement strategies.
- Master Plan Document Team will develop an outline and format. Prepare a draft Master Plan.
- Project Implementation Monitoring Team (not yet established) will implement the Master Plan, monitor opportunities, identify and monitor funding opportunities, and assist in prioritizing projects.



County/Community Beautification Master Plan Status

Legend

- Completed Master Plan
- Plan in Progress
- Future Plan Opportunities



DECEMBER, 2004
DISTRICT 06 & 10



Figure 5-2

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5.4 Aesthetic Illustrations-Examples

The following are actual aesthetic illustration examples that may be developed on Route 99. These can be utilized either by local or State beautification efforts.

Figure 5.3 Aesthetic Paving Treatments

Figure 5.4 Gateway Monumentation

Figure 5.5 Planting

Figure 5.6 Retaining Wall Aesthetics

Figure 5.7 Soundwall Aesthetics

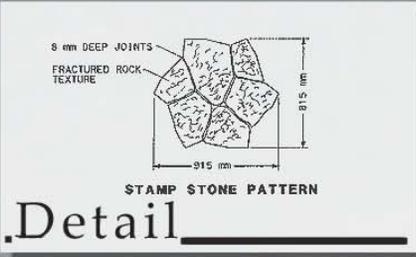
Figure 5.8 Structures Aesthetics

Figure 5.9 Structures Fencing

Figure 5.10 Structures Lighting

Figure 5.11 Transportation Art





Aesthetic Paving Treatments



Figure 5-3





Figure 5-4





Figure 5-5





Retaining Wall Aesthetics

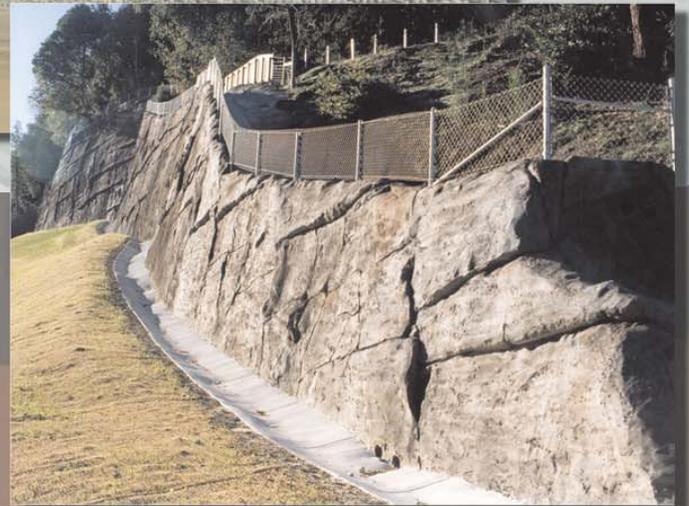


Figure 5-6





Figure 5-7





Structures Aesthetics

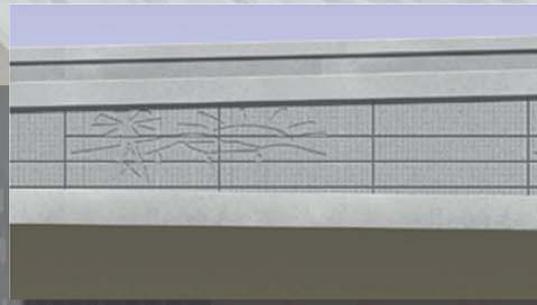
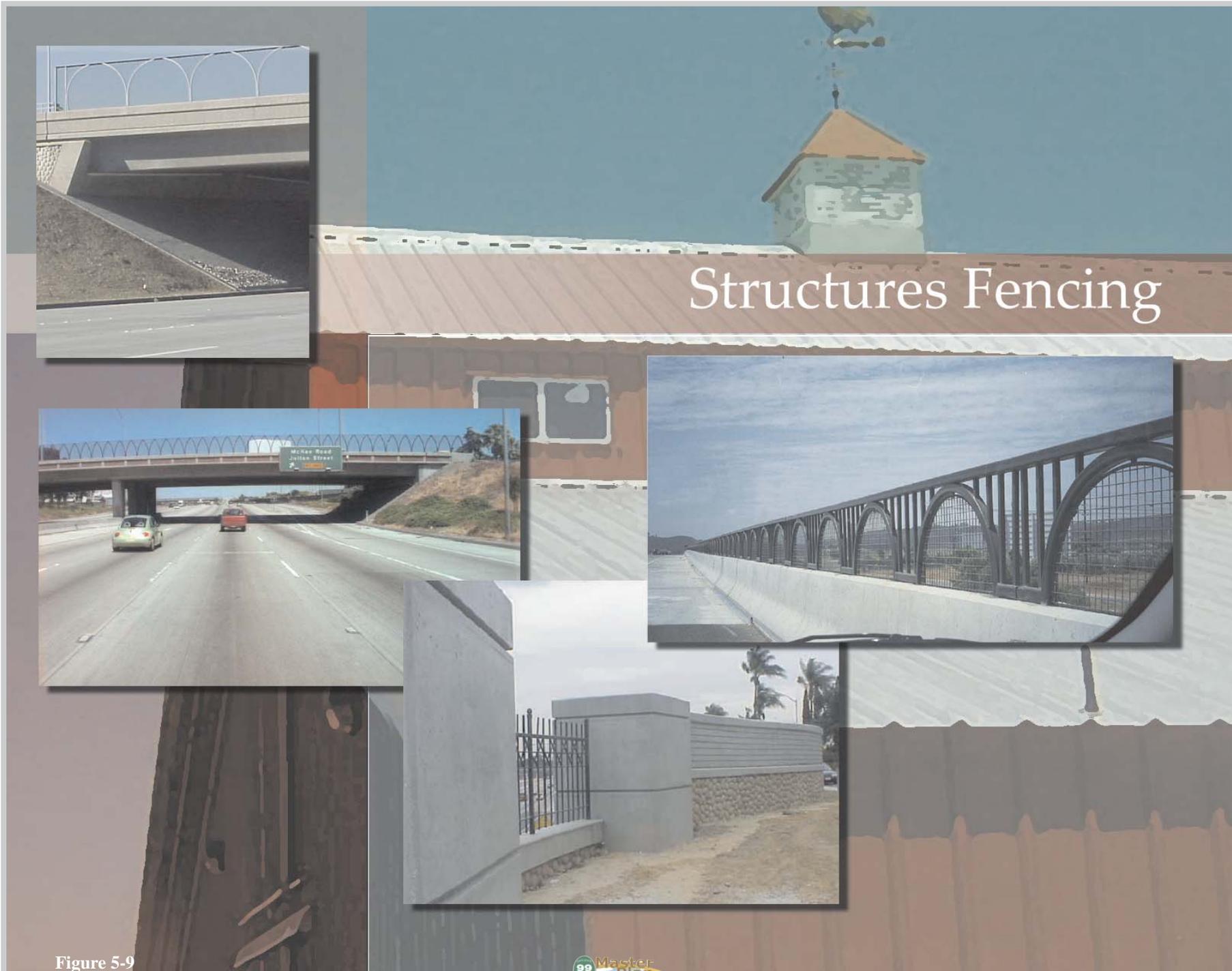


Figure 5-8





Structures Fencing

Figure 5-9

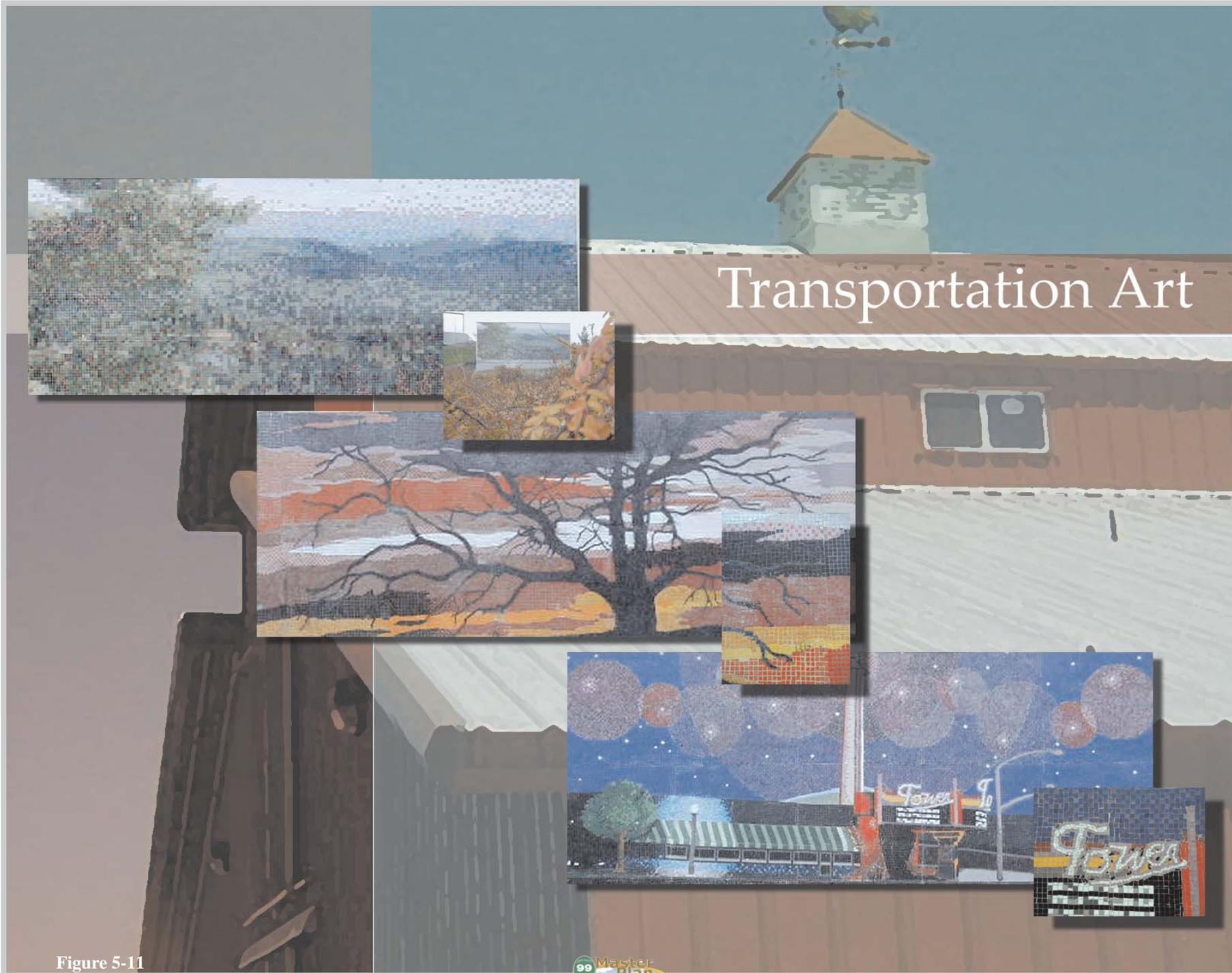


Structures Lighting



Figure 5-10





Transportation Art

Figure 5-11

