



TEAM PROJECT NARRATIVE

US 101 RECONSTRUCTION

Between the City of Oceanview and the Town of Golden, California

Existing Conditions

The existing two-lane state highway between the City of Oceanview and the Town of Golden in Make Believe County, California is a windy, narrow road, with substandard shoulders, broken pavement, and poor drainage. Locally known as Purple Canyon Road, the highway passes through Purple Canyon, rising with 8% to 9% grades to the summit between the Big and Little Purple Mountains. The canyon wall with its unique rock outcroppings, is unstable, periodically resulting in fallen rock that create hazards for motorists.

Economic development in Oceanview has resulted in many new industries being located between the older developed part of the city and the adjacent freeway, particularly along Sunset Boulevard. To accommodate workers, a range of suburban development has expanded the boundaries of the city east toward the mountains and south toward the ocean. A picturesque golf course with views of the mountains and the ocean is the new recreational centerpiece of the city. A new shopping center on the edge of the older part of town seems to be attracting significant traffic away from Oceanview's decaying downtown.

Almost sleepily, perhaps because the connection to Interstate 5 is 3 miles to the east or 5 miles to the west through Oceanview, the Town of Golden has retained its historic character. Many of the town's commercial and residential buildings are historic. The town trades on its historic resources, indeed its historic mill situated on Golden Creek has become an icon symbolizing the community and even the region.

Although Golden has become an artist's colony in the past 40 years, attracting some of the west coast's best craft-workers, most residents travel to Oceanview for shopping and entertainment. There are no schools in Golden with children busing or bicycling to Oceanview for their education.

US 101 crosses an historic bridge over Golden Creek before it enters the Town of Golden on its west side where it becomes Main Street. Although the road through town is four lanes, two are used permanently used for parking. Like Oceanview, Golden is also laid out on a grid pattern. Just east of Golden, US 101 returns to a 4-lane facility.

Despite encroachment from development, Spring Hill Orchards still produces award-winning fruit and its products attract hundreds of visitors daily during the fall harvest. The orderly trees, planted in straight rows for thousands of feet are most striking in the spring when they flower profusely. California 1, a designated scenic highway, with the rugged Purple Mountains in the background and orchards in the foreground on land side and titanic waves crashing into stoic cliffs and spectacular views of migrating whales on the sea side, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. As the scenic highway crosses Golden Creek, it is possible to glimpse Golden, its historic bridges and buildings to the north of the highway.

The Problem

Caltrans has identified the segment of US 101 between the City of Oceanview and the Town of Golden as being substandard. Narrow lanes, narrow shoulders, poor pavement, steep grades, a winding alignment, rock hazards, and an ADT that is rising nearly 5% per year contribute to an accident rate three times the state average. Single car accidents are extremely high. The death last year on the narrow 2-lane bridge over Golden Creek of a male middle school student who

was struck by a car at dusk as he rode his bicycle home to Golden after his school's football practice has pushed the community to accept that adverse impacts to visual quality may be necessary to improve the safety and mobility of the highway.

Despite being a poor road, traffic and congestion continues to increase not only on this segment of US 101 but also on the interstate and the scenic highway as travelers seek alternative parallel routes (even though they are less direct, they can be faster) between Oceanview and Golden. Improving US 101, may relieve congestion not only on US 101 but also on Interstate 5 and California 1 by removing short-distance commuters from those routes.

Proposed Solutions

To relieve congestion and improve mobility and safety, Caltrans has developed a series of alternative solutions:

- Alternative 1 would resurface the existing highway and widen and surface the shoulders to six feet. In Golden, parking would be removed from one side of the highway to accommodate six-foot bicycle lanes on both sides. Using the "safe routes to school" program, a separate project to build a bridge to handle pedestrian and bicycle traffic would be built over Golden Creek using architectural treatments that fit the character of the town.
- Alternative 2 would add two lanes to the existing route, impacting the adjacent rock outcroppings along the highway through Purple Canyon. It would reduce the climb to the summit by cutting a new corridor through the Little Purple Mountains. The existing 2-lane bridge would be widened using the same architectural character that currently exists, creating a single four-lane bridge with adequate shoulders and sidewalks. Parking would be removed from both sides of Main Street in Golden to accommodate 4-through lanes of traffic.
- Alternative 3 would also add two-lanes throughout the corridor. It would incorporate the new cut through the Little Purple Mountains from Alternative 2 but rather than alter the existing historic bridge it would build a new 4-lane bridge downstream from the existing bridge. This alternative would completely avoid Golden, reconnecting with US 101 just east of that town.
- Alternative 4 would develop a new 4-lane facility by skirting south of the Little Purple Mountains. With views of the ocean, it would sweep between the mountains and the orchards. Then connect into Alternative 3 to cross Golden Creek and reconnect with US 101 just east of the town

All alternatives would affect the newly developed suburban area of Oceanview and its new golf course by adding two additional lanes, shoulders, and a median. Both rural and an urban cross-sections are being considered in this area.