

State of California  
Business, Transportation & Housing Agency  
Department of Transportation

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS  
Adoption of Findings For Future  
Consideration of Funding  
7-LA-5 53.0  
Action Item

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CTC Meeting: January 17-18, 2001  
Agenda Item: 2.2c.(1)

*Original Signed By* \_\_\_\_\_  
W. J. EVANS, Deputy Director  
Finance  
January 5, 2001

**ADOPTION OF FINDINGS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING**  
**ROUTE 5 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends that the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-01-11.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This resolution proposes to adopt the findings for future consideration of funding for the following project for which an Environmental Impact Report has been completed:

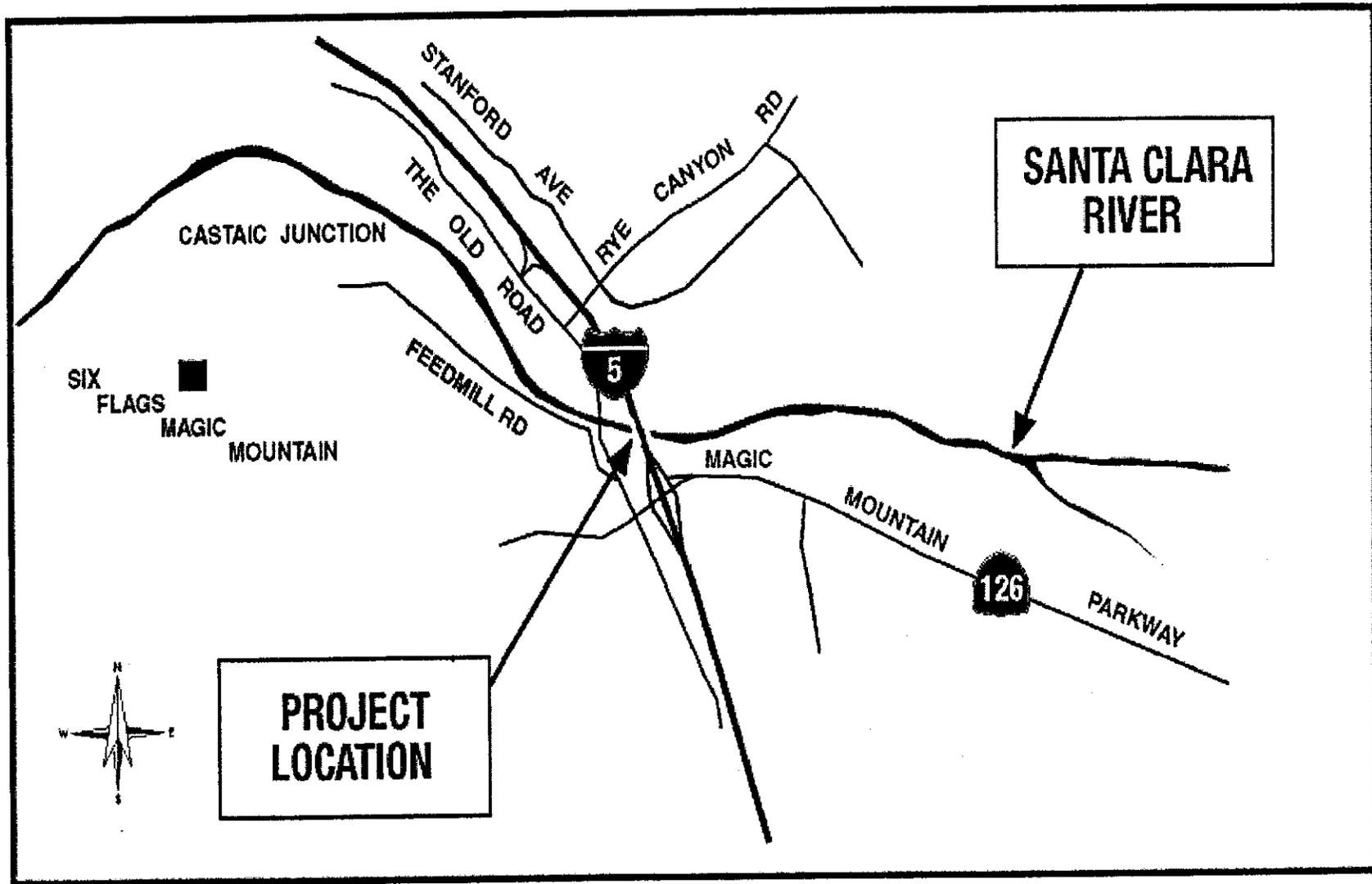
- Route 5 in Los Angeles County- Replace the Santa Clara River Bridge in the City of Santa Clarita.

Replacement of the existing structures is programmed in the 2000 State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) for construction in the 2000/01 fiscal year at \$32.1 million (\$29.4 million capital funds and \$2.7 support funds). The replacement structure will deck the existing median and will be wider than the existing two structures to conform with the ramp configuration of the adjacent Magic Mountain Parkway Interchange. The Valencia Company will fund the additional widening beyond the standards for replacement in kind. The current cost estimate for the new bridge is \$35.4 million (capital and support funds). The Valencia Company secured \$3.9 million in federal demonstration funding for the project in the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21).

The approved Environmental Impact Report has been transmitted to Commission staff.

The Department has approved the project for construction. This approval and the resultant filing of the Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research will satisfy the environmental requirements for this stage of the project planning process.

Attachment



Project Location Map  
Santa Clara River Bridge Replacement Project  
KP 86.4  
FA 176000

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**Resolution for Adoption of Findings  
7-LA-5 53.0  
Resolution E-01-11**

- 1.1 **WHEREAS**, an Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for a project to replace the Santa Clara River Bridge in the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, and
  - 1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Environmental Impact Report has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and
  - 1.3 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Environmental Impact Report; and
  - 1.4 **WHEREAS**, written proposed Findings indicate that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects identified in the Environmental Impact Report and associated with threatened and/or endangered specie (least Bell's vireo and the unarmored threespine stickleback) and the movement and migration of animals.
- 2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby adopt those Findings and approve the project for future consideration of funding.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
CEQA FINDINGS FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SANTA CLARA RIVER  
BRIDGE ALONG INTERSTATE 5 IN THE CITY OF SANTA CLARITA,  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The following information is presented to comply with Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, and Section 1509.6 of the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations. Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

Mitigation monitoring will be in accordance with Caltrans' standard program contained in Article 1-2.8 of the Environmental Handbook, Volume 1.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

### **BIOLOGICAL**

**Adverse Environmental Effect:** The proposed action will result in a reduction of the numbers of or encroach upon the critical habitat for unique, threatened, and/or endangered species of animals. Both the least Bell's vireo and unarmored threespine stickleback (proposed) critical habitats are directly adjacent to the I-5 bridge structure on the downstream side. All impacts within critical habitat would be those associated with work on this side of the structure. This would result in a 0.11-acre permanent impact to vireo and stickleback critical habitat, and 0.43-acre of temporary impacts. These impacts are based on impacts to riparian habitat and open waters, which are assumed to constitute the critical habitat for these species.

**Findings:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects thereof as identified in the Final EIR.

**Statement of Facts:** Because this is a bridge replacement project, the alternatives we have to work with consist of design alternatives. The location of the bridge is fixed. It is also a necessary safety precaution for workers to perform work in the riverbed during the non-rainy season, therefore, work must be scheduled from April – October. Understanding this, Caltrans has prepared a number of mitigation measures that minimize impacts to the endangered species in the area. These mitigation measures include:

- Caltrans would provide onsite revegetation after the cessation of construction activities.
- The existing access gate would be increased in size. Additionally, another gate would be placed on the downstream, uplands side. Anything that lessens human intrusion into the riparian zone is of utmost importance.
- Caltrans would commit to the removal of exotic vegetation both onsite and offsite.

- Caltrans has conducted previous cowbird trapping sessions on this section of river and believes further trapping would be appropriate mitigation for this species. These traps would be in operation for the two successive breeding seasons that construction is occurring.
- Caltrans would perform spring protocol surveys for the year 2000. These surveys would be onsite, and at least 500 yards upstream and downstream from the bridge site.
- Furthermore, Caltrans would conduct spring surveys throughout the construction period in order to gauge impacts to this species from on going construction activities. Caltrans would also conduct post-construction surveys for two years after construction to gauge immigration back into the project area.
- All Best Management Practices which reduce contaminants or sedimentation to the surface flows of the Santa Clara River would be implemented. This would include, but not be limited to silt fencing, hay bales, sandbags, sediment catchment devices and other methods to control sedimentation and erosion. All state litter laws would be followed. All fuel and water tanks would be kept a minimum of 100 feet from the edge of the nearest surface flow.
- Fish barrier netting would be placed at the upstream and downstream limits of the project area prior to the commencement of construction. All fish would then be relocated outside the project limits by a qualified ichthyologist.
- Flows would in no way be impeded at any time during construction. The contractor could culvert water through the work area, or use another method, pending approval by Caltrans and the Resource Agencies. At the end of construction all aspects of diversion would be removed.
- A platform, or some other device, would be placed under the bridge, but above flow line to catch any debris. This would be addressed in the contractor's Water Pollution Control Plan.
- A fish monitor (ichthyologist) would be hired to monitor fish populations during construction.
- Work in the riverbed would occur from April to October. This would keep construction activities out of the riverbed during the rainy season when the likelihood of an accident effecting water quality is much higher. Also, work would be during daylight hours whenever possible to avoid impacts to the wildlife corridor function at this locale.

**Adverse Environmental Effect:** The proposed project will result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals. Based on project duration, this would result in a temporal impact of two successive breeding seasons for the least Bell's vireo. Because of this species' site tenacity and sensitivity to changes in riparian vegetation, an impact to two successive breeding seasons could cause a change in localized dispersal for an indeterminate amount of time.

**Findings:** Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects thereof as identified in the Final EIR.

**Statement of Facts:** Because this is a bridge replacement project, the alternatives we have to work with consist of design alternatives. The location of the bridge is fixed. It is also a necessary safety precaution for workers to perform work in the riverbed during the non-

rainy season, therefore, work must be scheduled from April – October. Understanding this, Caltrans has prepared a number of mitigation measures that minimize impacts to the endangered species in the area (see above).