

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Date: November 6-7, 2002

Reference No.: 2.3a(1)
Action Item

From: ROBERT L. GARCIA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Karla Sutliff
Chief
Division of Design

Ref: **RECISSION OF FREEWAY ADOPTION, 05-SB 135 KP 16.1/21.2 (10.0/13.2),
RESOLUTION HRU-02-01.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted for transmittal to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) is the Resolution HRU 02-01. As requested by the City of Santa Maria and concurred with by the District, the Department of Transportation recommends the Commission approve Resolution HRU 02-01 to rescind the freeway adoption for Route 135 in the City of Santa Maria and in Santa Barbara County, from Kilometer Post 16.1 to 21.2 (Post Mile 10.0 to 13.2).

On July 18, 2002, the Commission adopted Resolution NIU 02-01 to notify local, regional and affected State agencies of its intent to consider rescinding the freeway adoption. The resolution also allowed these agencies to submit within 60 days any additional information prior to the Commission's final consideration. This procedure is in accordance with the policy for recycling freeway adoptions established by the Commission in Resolution G-15, adopted on November 17, 1978 and amended on February 29, 1980. The following report provides an evaluation of the proposed rescission and a summary of the comments received during the 60-day response period. There is no excess right of way to dispose of.

Recommended by: 
BRENT FELKER, Deputy Director
Project Development

Background

Existing State Highway Route 135 begins in Los Alamos in Santa Barbara County at U.S. Highway 101 and runs northward 18.9 kilometers (11.7 miles) as a two lane conventional highway to its junction with State Highway Route 1. For 6 kilometers (3.75 miles) combined State Highway Routes 1 and 135 continue northward as a four lane divided highway with at grade intersections. From its northern separation from State Highway Route 1, State Highway Route 135 continues for 7.7 kilometers (4.8 miles) as a controlled access facility with a diamond interchange at Clark Avenue and at-grade intersections to Santa Maria. As State Highway Route 135 enters the City of Santa Maria it becomes a six-lane urban arterial and continues for another 7.4 kilometers (4.6 miles) through Santa Maria with full development on both sides and no access control to its northern terminus at U.S. 101. This section from State Highway Route 1 to U.S. 101 is functionally classified as a Principal Arterial and is a Federal Aid Urban Route. State Highway Route 135 is not on either the California Freeway and Expressway System (F&E System), or the California Scenic Highway System. Though not listed on the F&E System, the Commission (California Highway Commission – CHC) adopted and declared that portion of State Highway Route 135 north of State Highway Route 1 to Patterson Rd as a freeway route on September 20, 1962 and from Patterson Rd north to KP 21.2 (PM 13.2) as a freeway route on December 14, 1955. The route is part of the National Highway System (NHS) from its beginning at U.S. 101 in Los Alamo, to Clark Avenue (see EXHIBIT A), south of Santa Maria.

Over the past thirty-five years, the type of connection for the approved Union Valley Parkway (UVP) has gone back and forth between an at-grade connection and a full interchange. Recently, the City of Santa Maria and Santa Barbara County have determined their direction as it relates to State Highway Route 135. Following the completion of appropriate engineering and environmental studies, the two local agencies now concur that the appropriate action is to rescind the freeway designation of State Highway Route 135 as identified in this report, and widen the existing facility to a six lane conventional highway with at grade intersections. To that end, the City of Santa Maria is currently preparing two projects on this route that assume State Route 135 is a conventional highway. The first is an at grade intersection for the proposed Union Valley Parkway, planned to connect with State Highway Route 135 at KP 17.1 (PM 10.7), ultimately providing an east-west link between US-101 and State Highway Route 1, serving current and future development as well as inter-regional mobility needs. This project is designated EA 05-41930, with a PSR approved June 2000. The second, EA 05-45580 with PSR(PDS) circulating for approval, proposes to widen State Highway Route 135 to six lanes between Union Valley Parkway and the existing six-lane facility at Santa Maria Way.

The 1986 Route Concept Report (RCR) is the current system planning document. This RCR states that the concept for this portion of State Highway Route 135 is a six-lane facility for the segment from KP 14.6 to 28.6 (PM 9.1-17.8). The City of Santa Maria's General Plan Circulation element shows this portion of Route 135 as a six lane primary arterial highway, not as a freeway. Rescission of the Freeway Adoption is consistent with the RCR and the current City and County circulation element in their general plans. State Highway Route 135 is on the list of inappropriate State routes considered candidates for relinquishment. Discussions of possible relinquishment of the route indicate the local agencies do not favor such action.

Numerous meetings and public hearings have been held with local agencies and elected officials to discuss the rescission of this portion of State Highway Route 135. The results have been an approved and signed resolution from the City of Santa Maria to the District 5 Director requesting the rescission. No funds or resources have been expended by the Department on engineering or environmental studies toward the development of a freeway on the roadway portion of interest.

Rescission of the freeway route adoption is not considered controversial in the District or community. Rather, it is the possible construction of a freeway facility as described in the freeway agreements that is controversial. Construction of the freeway facility would require right of way acquisition estimated at \$2.4 million in 1998 and would take the facility close to school and park properties as well as require the closing or realignment of roadways considered essential to local circulation. While originally included in freeway agreements approximately 50 years ago, the realignment and closures are now controversial. Local residents and civic leaders concur with Project Study Reports and Environmental Documents that conclude a six-lane conventional highway with at-grade intersections would better serve the needs and desires of the community, would be approximately \$1 million less expensive, would be more sensitive to the context of the area, provide better inter-regional and local circulation, and would eliminate the need for approval of non-standard expressway intersection spacing at Union Valley Parkway.

Proposal

The District proposes to rescind the freeway route adoption for 5.1 kilometers (3.2 miles) of State Highway Route 135 from the beginning of the southbound Clark Avenue off ramp at KP 16.1 (PM 10.0), to the northern terminus of the freeway adoption at KP 21.2 (PM 13.2) in the City of Santa Maria (see EXHIBIT A). This portion of State Highway Route 135 would become a conventional highway. All acquired right of way is necessary for the completion of the City's proposed six-lane widening project, therefore, there is no excess right of way to dispose of. The District proposes to retain previously purchased access rights to maintain the integrity of the system by limiting access to currently proposed levels, including the at grade connection with the proposed Union Valley Parkway.

Coordination

With the Commission's approval of Resolution NIU 02-01, the Department notified all affected local and regional agencies of the rescission proposal and asked the agencies for any additional pertinent information that might be helpful to the Commission in making a final decision. The Department also notified the State Clearinghouse so that other State agencies might be notified.

Summary of Notice and Comments

Public notice, attached Exhibit B, was published in the Santa Maria Times and in the State Clearinghouse's Journal to state agencies beginning August 16, 2002. Following the 60 day comment period, two comments had been received, none adverse. One item sought clarification of the reason for the proposed rescission. The second noted the fact that the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments adopted a position of support for the rescission at its September 19, 2002 meeting.

Conclusions

Local governments and citizens do not support a freeway for this portion of State Highway Route 135. A freeway designation conflicts with the local long range planning and is deemed too disruptive and insensitive to the context of the area. Local governments and the citizens feel it has been shown that the most appropriate facility designation for State Highway Route 135 is as a conventional highway to serve as an urban arterial. They have documented this position with the approved circulation plans and their choices of near term improvement projects for the highway. Construction of a freeway facility would require the closure of existing intersections, purchase of additional right of way for relocation of frontage roads, increased impacts to adjacent property owners and would require significantly increased funding to

construct the grade separation of proposed intersections. It would also require the approval of non-standard interchange/intersection spacing, which has previously been denied.

With the high costs and strong opposition, a freeway is no longer considered viable. The rescission of this portion of the State Highway Route 135 freeway adoption would conclude a 35 year highway planning issue and would allow local governments to proceed with plans to improve the facility in a manner most appropriate to the character and needs of the area.

Attachments

Resolution HRU 02-01
Exhibit A
Exhibit B

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Rescission of Freeway Adoption
5-SB-135 KP 16.1/21.2 (PM 10.0/13.2)

Resolution HRU 02-01

WHEREAS, a location for State highway Route 135 was previously adopted and declared a freeway on December 14, 1955 and September 20, 1962, between State Route 1 and a point "1.5 miles south of Santa Maria", or approximately KP 21.2 (PM 13.2); and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Maria, on September 22, 2001, approved resolution No. 2001-164, requesting that the freeway adoption of Route 135 between KP 16.1 and 21.2 (PM 10.0/13.2) be rescinded to a conventional highway adoption; and

WHEREAS, this portion of Route 135 from Clark Avenue to Santa Maria Way is designated as a primary arterial highway and not as a freeway, in the City's General Plan Circulation element; and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Barbara, on January 7, 2002, submitted to the Department, a letter of support for the City of Santa Maria's resolution No. 2001-164; and

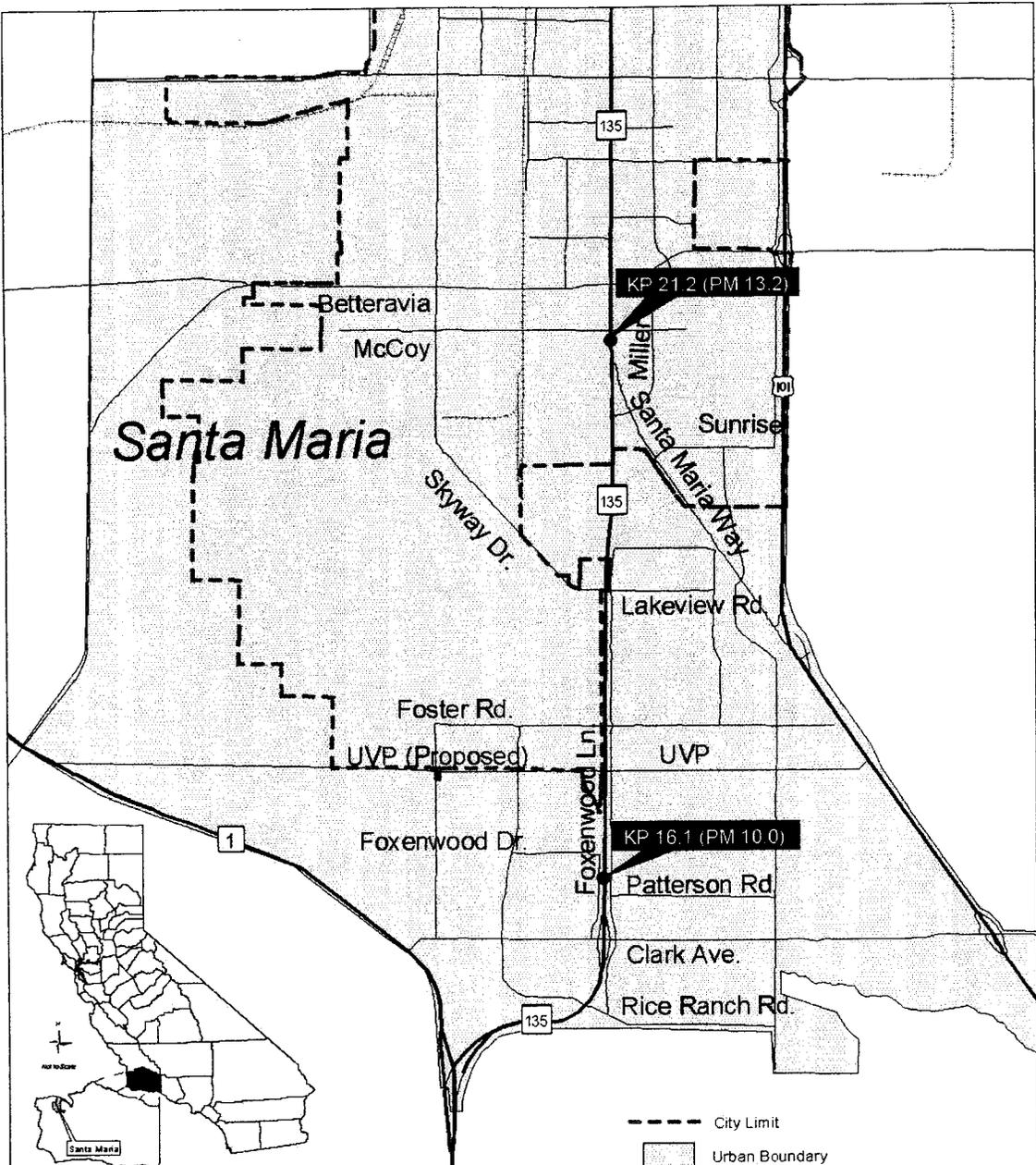
WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara Council of Governments voted to support the rescission of freeway adoption at its September 19, 2002 meeting, and

WHEREAS, engineering and environmental studies for proposed City improvement projects on Route 135 indicate that a conventional highway is the appropriate level of State facility to serve the needs and desires of the community, its local circulation element and inter-regional traffic, and to be sensitive to the context of the community; and

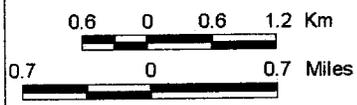
WHEREAS, the aforementioned freeway is not likely to be constructed and retention of the freeway adoption would subject the California Transportation Commission to possible future expense for acquisition and maintenance of property or future expense for acquisition of property on a hardship basis; and

WHEREAS, there is no excess right of way to dispose of.

NOW, THEREFOR, BE IT RESOLVED by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby rescind the freeway adoption of State Highway Route 135 in the County of Santa Barbara and City of Santa Maria, from 0.6 kilometer (0.4 mile) north of Clark Avenue to the northern end of said adoption at approximately 0.5 kilometer (0.3 mile) north of Santa Maria Way, Kilometer Post 16.1 to 21.2 (Post Mile 10.0 to 13.2).



District 5
System
Planning



Route 135
Route Inventory Report
Route Rescission Map
EXHIBIT A

City Limit source data: City of Santa Maria
Creation Date: June 25, 2002
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EXHIBIT A

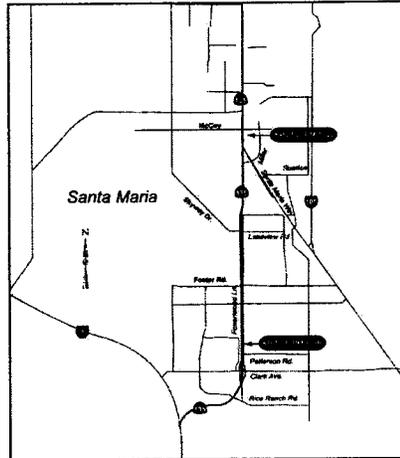


PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Intent to Rescind Freeway Adoption Segment of State Route 135 in Santa Maria

WHAT IS BEING PLANNED?

The California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), in cooperation with the City of Santa Maria and County of Santa Barbara has requested that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) remove the Freeway Route designation for a portion of State Route 135, in Santa Barbara County, from 0.6 kilometer (0.4 mile) north of Clark Avenue to 0.5 kilometer (0.3 mile) north of Santa Maria Way. This segment of the route would be re-designated as a conventional highway and would remain a state highway and all existing right-of-way would be retained for future transportation needs.



WHY THIS AD?

A request for Notice of Intent to Consider Rescinding Freeway Adoption (NIU 02-01), was reviewed and approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) on July 18, 2002. That approval allows CALTRANS to gather public input to be used in the final recommendation to the CTC. This notification provides 60 days for the public to comment on the proposed change from freeway designation to conventional highway designation before Caltrans returns to the CTC with their Final Recommendation on November 6-7, 2002.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

For the original presentation of rescission to the CTC, two documents were prepared and are available for viewing at the Caltrans District 5 Office located at 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93401. These documents include a Route Inventory Report (RIR) for State Route 135 and the Notice of Intent of Consider Rescinding Freeway Adoption (NIU 02-01).

When are Comments Due?

All comments should be made in writing and should be submitted for consideration by October 14, 2002. Comments can be mailed to Caltrans, District 5, Attn: Project Manager Paul Martinez, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 or via e-mail at: paul_martinez@dot.ca.gov.

CONTACT

For more information about this rescission, please contact Paul Martinez, Project Manager at (805) 549-3407 or Keith Hinrichsen, Associate Transportation Planner at (805) 549-3099.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Individuals who require special accommodations (e.g. American Sign Language interpreter, accessible seating, documentation in alternate formats, etc.) are required to contact District 05 Public Affairs Office at (805) 549-3138. Telecommunications Devices for the deaf (TDD) users may contact the California Relay Service TDD line at 1-800-735-2929 or Voice Line at 1-800-735-2922.

EXHIBIT B

Santa Barbara County
**ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENTS**

TAB 23 (2.3a.(1))

September 20, 2002

REC'D BY CTC

OCT 16 2002

Ms. Dianne McKenna, Chair
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street Room 2233 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Member
Agencies**

Subject: Rescission of Route 135 Freeway Agreement

City of
Buellton

Dear Ms. McKenna

City of
Carpinteria

At its September 19, 2002 meeting, the SBCAG board of directors unanimously adopted a position in support of the proposed rescission of the Route 135 freeway agreement in Santa Barbara County. This proposal would eliminate the freeway route adoption for the 3.2 mile segment of Route 135 between Clark Avenue and Santa Maria Way in the City of Santa Maria and unincorporated Orcutt area. The existing designation of this segment of Route 135 as a freeway is inconsistent with the City's adopted Circulation Element and the existing conventional highway designation for remaining portion of Route 135 in the Santa Maria urbanized area.

City of
Goleta

The proposed rescission is necessary to allow planned improvements to the local road system to go forward including the construction of a new intersection with Union Valley Parkway. The construction of UVP with an at-grade intersection at Route 135 is consistent with SBCAG's adopted Regional Transportation Plan and has been programmed in the FTIP for several years.

City of
Guadalupe

City of
Lompoc

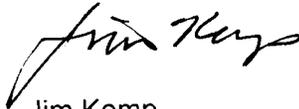
The rescission is schedule to be considered for approval by the commission at its November 6-7, 2002 meeting. The proposal is supported by the City of Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County and Caltrans District 5. We urge the commisson to approve the proposed rescission of the Route 135 freeway agreement.

City of
Santa Barbara

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

City of
Santa Maria



Jim Kemp
Executive Director

City of
Solvang

cc: Paul Karp
Phil Demery
Gregg Albright

County of
Santa Barbara

File No. SP-2
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