

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: September 19-20, 2007

Reference No.: 2.2b.
Action Item

From: CINDY McKIM
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Jay Norvell
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, STATE ROUTE 405 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY – ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS NEAR LOS ANGELES**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) review and comment at the September 2007 Commission meeting on the following Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR):

- 07-LA-405, PM 28.8/39.0, Roadway improvements near Los Angeles in Los Angeles County.

PROGRAMMING:

This project in Los Angeles County would construct roadway improvements that include a new HOV lane along a portion of State Route 405 in and near Los Angeles. The project is programmed for \$950,000,000 with Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funds, Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funds, Federal Demonstration Funds, and local funds. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10.

ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED:

Alternatives considered for the proposed project include:

- Alternative 1: No Build
- Alternative 2: Construct a standard northbound HOV Lane on Interstate 405 from approximately the Interstate 10 interchange to the US-101 interchange.
- Alternative 3: Construct a standard northbound HOV Lane on Interstate 405 from approximately the Interstate 10 interchange to the US-101 interchange. In addition, the existing section of Interstate 405 would be improved to standard freeway profiles within the project limits.

POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

- Impacts to a historical resource.
- Construction-period and project generated noise impacts.
- Impacts to biological resources.
- Residential displacements.
- Failure to meet a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency.

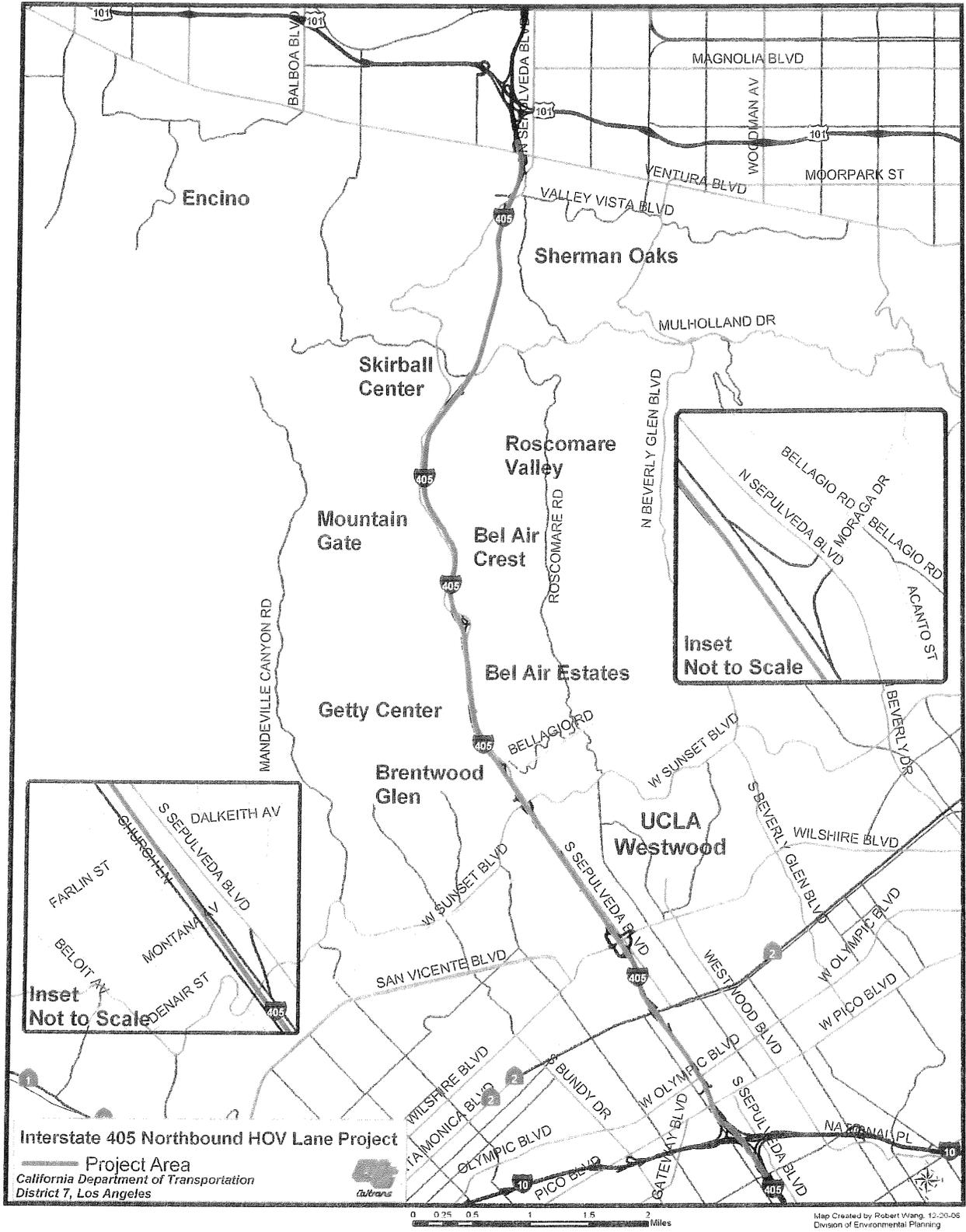
Because of the potentially significant environmental impacts listed above, public controversy, and the large scope of the project, an Environmental Impact Report is being prepared.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM:

- Preparation of a formal agreement between the Department and the State Historic Preservation Office regarding mitigation measures for the Mulholland Drive Overcrossing, a listed historical structure.
- Incorporate sound walls in the project design.
- Employ noise-reducing construction practices.
- Replacement of native and walnut trees at a 5:1 ratio.
- Incorporate wildlife crossing features in the project design.
- Provide relocation payments and assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act.
- Preparation of a Traffic Management Plan to be used during the construction period.

Attachment

Figure S-2: Project Location Map



Memorandum

To: Chair and Commissioners

Date: September 10, 2007

From: John F. Barna, Jr.
Executive Director

File No: Agenda Item 82
Ref. 2.2b
ACTION

Ref: **ROUTE 405 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY – SELPUVEDA PASS HOV WIDENING PROJECT (DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT)**

Issue:

Should the Commission, as a responsible agency, comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Route 405 Sepulveda Pass Widening and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Improvement Project in Los Angeles County?

Three alternatives are assessed in the draft EIR:

- Alternative 1, the no build alternative.
- Alternative 2, add a standard northbound HOV Lane and standardize northbound mixed-flow lanes, median and shoulder. The capital outlay cost of Alternative 2 is estimated at \$649 million in 2006 dollars.
- Alternative 3, add a standard northbound HOV lane and standardize northbound **and southbound** lanes, median and shoulder. The capital outlay cost of Alternative 3 is estimated at \$911 million in 2006 dollars

Recommendation:

Commission staff recommends that:

- The Commission makes no comment regarding the environmental impact of the proposed alternatives.

Staff further notes that CMIA funds (\$730 million) are programmed for a northbound HOV lane between Route 10 to Route 101. Proposition 1B funds are finite; the Commission made it clear at the time of programming that increases in project cost or scope in CMIA programmed projects would require the agency/agencies to identify and secure the funding necessary to complete the project. Of three alternatives, Alternative 2 is the alternative most similar to the project programmed with CMIA funds in terms of scope. Staff further recommends that:

- Caltrans and its partners identify and secure the funding sources needed to complete the alternative selected, particularly if the project cost estimates are higher than the amounts currently programmed.

Background:

The proposed project would widen and make HOV improvements on about 10 miles of Route 405 from Route 10 to Route 101 in the city of Los Angeles.

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to reduce existing and forecast traffic congestion on Route 405 between Route 10 and Route 101. This project would reduce congestion and is expected to enhance traffic operations by adding freeway capacity in an area that already experiences heavy congestion.

The secondary goal is to improve both existing and future mobility and enhance safety throughout the corridor, while minimizing environmental and economic impacts. The project would transfer through-vehicle trips to the regional highway system, ease congestion, improve mobility by moving twice as many vehicles as a regular traffic lane, decrease commuter times for all drivers, reduce air pollution, and promote ridesharing.

The project has \$950 million programmed, allocated or available from Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funds (\$730 million), Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funds (\$90 million), Federal Demonstration Funds (\$117 million), and local funds (\$13 million). The \$730 million in CMIA funds were programmed by the Commission at its February 2007 meeting for a northbound HOV lane between Route 10 to Route 101. Construction contract award is scheduled for April 2009.

Seven alternatives were considered initially in developing the draft EIR. Of the seven, three alternatives were assessed for their environmental impact in the draft EIR

Alternative 1: No Build

This alternative would maintain the current configuration of the existing freeway, ramps, and local intersections within the project limits.

Alternative 2: Add a Standard Northbound HOV Lane and Standardize Northbound Mixed-Flow Lanes, Median and Shoulder

This alternative would add one standard northbound HOV lane to the existing facility. Standard freeway profiles for northbound Route 405 within the project limits except through the Route 405/Route 10 interchange would be provided. A 12-foot half median, a 12-foot HOV lane, a 4-foot HOV buffer, five 12-foot mixed-flow lanes, and a 10-foot outside shoulder would also be provided. Several interchanges would also be improved in order to reduce accidents associated with traffic on the ramps. Most of the freeway widening required for this project would occur along the east side of Route 405 along Sepulveda Boulevard between Montana Avenue and Moraga Drive and between Getty Center Drive and the northbound Getty Center off-ramp. Sepulveda Boulevard would be slightly realigned at the relocated southbound Route 405 Skirball Center Drive on/off-ramps in order to add a left-turn lane to the on-ramp. Some widening would also occur along the west side of the freeway within the following segments: between Ohio Avenue and Waterford Street; between Bel Air Crest and Mulholland Drive; and between the southbound on-ramp from Sepulveda/Valley Vista to the north end of the project (just south of Ventura Boulevard).

The Wilshire Boulevard interchange would be improved in both directions. The northbound on-ramp from eastbound Wilshire Boulevard would be grade-separated from the northbound off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Boulevard and from Sepulveda Boulevard. The southbound off-ramp to eastbound Wilshire Boulevard would be grade-separated from the southbound off-ramp to westbound Wilshire Boulevard.

The northbound Route 405 off-ramp to Montana Boulevard/Sepulveda Boulevard would be closed in order to accommodate freeway widening (this closure would be required under all build alternatives). The northbound Route 405 Sunset Boulevard interchange would also be improved. The northbound Route 405 off-ramp to eastbound Sunset Boulevard would be widened to include one more lane. The northbound Route 405 on-ramp from eastbound Sunset Boulevard would have two exclusive 12-foot lanes on the reconstructed Sunset Boulevard overcrossing and two 12-foot lanes on the on-ramp. In the eastbound direction, three 12-foot lanes and three 11-foot lanes in the westbound direction would be provided, which would solve the existing reduction from three lanes to two lanes in the eastbound direction. In both directions, 4-foot shoulders and 5-foot sidewalks as well as a 13-foot median would be provided on the Sunset Boulevard overcrossing. The irregular northbound Route 405 on/off-hook ramps at the Getty Center interchange would be reconfigured to a standard diamond interchange to increase stopping sight distances in order to improve safety.

The southbound Route 405 Skirball Center Drive interchange would be relocated approximately 1,640 feet to the south to form a "T" intersection with Sepulveda Boulevard. This would eliminate the existing intersection at the end of the southbound Route 405 Skirball Center Drive off-ramp located 66 feet east of the Skirball Center Drive/Sepulveda Boulevard intersection. The traffic congestion problems caused by the close proximity of these two traffic intersections would be eliminated. The southbound Valley Vista/Sepulveda Boulevard off-ramp would be reconstructed due to freeway widening.

A total of 12 soundwalls and 54 retaining walls within the project limits would be constructed at embankments where right-of-way is constrained. A total of 12 undercrossings within the project limits would be widened. Three overcrossings at Sunset Boulevard, Skirball Center Drive, and Mulholland Drive would need to be replaced. The capital outlay cost of Alternative 2 is estimated at \$649 million in 2006 dollars.

Alternative 3: Add a Standard Northbound HOV Lane and Standardize Northbound and Southbound Lanes, Median and Shoulder

In addition to the features as described in Alternative 2, standard freeway profiles would be provided for northbound and southbound Route 405 within the project limits except through the Route 405/Route 10 interchange. Similar to Alternative 2, Route 405 would be widened along the east side and along most of the west side throughout the project limits. Changes associated with this alternative that are not a part of Alternative 2 include:

- Closure of the southbound Route 405 on-ramp from eastbound Sunset Boulevard. In conjunction with this ramp closure, the ramp intersection located immediately north of the Sunset Boulevard/Church Lane intersection would be reconfigured so that the existing island would be eliminated and the middle lane at the northbound approach would be changed from a through lane to a shared through/right-turn lane;
- Approximately 2,300 feet of Sepulveda Boulevard would be realigned along the westside of Route 405 north of the Getty Center/Route 405 interchange due to the widening planned along the westside of Route 405; and
- Most of Church Lane between approximately Chenault Street and Kiel Street would be realigned to the west to facilitate the Route 405 widening.
- A total of 13 soundwalls and 75 retaining walls within the project limits would be constructed at embankments where right-of-way is constrained.

The capital outlay cost of Alternative 3 is estimated at \$911 million in 2006 dollars.