

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 13, 2010

Reference No.: 2.3b.
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Terry L. Abbott
Chief
Division of Design

Subject: **NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 5-SLO-101 PM 6.4**
RESOLUTION S-742

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached Resolution S-742 and map authorizing a new public road connection at Willow Road to State Route (SR) 101, in the community of Nipomo, in San Luis Obispo County.

ISSUE:

The County of San Luis Obispo requested approval of a new public road connection to SR 101. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of a new public road connection as an interchange to SR 101 in the county of San Luis Obispo, in the community of Nipomo, at Post Mile (PM) 6.4.

Recommended by: _____
MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Chief Engineer (Interim)

BACKGROUND:

In order to enhance traffic circulation, improve emergency access, and relieve congestion in the Nipomo area of southern San Luis Obispo County, the County of San Luis Obispo proposes to construct a new interchange at SR 101 and Willow Road, north of the Tefft Street interchange. The proposed project includes the extension of Willow Road across SR 101 to Thompson Road with the intention to provide a much needed east-west arterial connection to SR 1 and the Callender area. The project will also relieve future traffic demand at the adjacent Tefft Street and Los Berros Road/Thompson Road interchanges.

In the project vicinity, the California Highway Commission adopted SR 101 as a freeway on April 20, 1955. SR 101 is the major and historic thoroughfare through the Central Coast areas of California and the principal inter-city connection for numerous communities between Los Angeles and San Francisco. SR 101 is on the Freeway and Expressway System, it is part of the National Highway System and it is functionally classified as a principal arterial. The Federal Department of Defense, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, has also identified SR 101 as a Strategic Highway Corridor Network Route. The route is designated on the National Truck Network under the federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act. In addition, SR 101 is on the Interregional Road System and is a designated Focus Route in the Department's Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan. SR 101 is also a State Highway Extra Legal Road Route.

SR 101, through the Nipomo area, is a four-lane freeway facility. It accommodates significant amounts of interregional, regional and urban traffic. The Nipomo area is served by three interchanges on SR 101: Hutton Road (SR 166) on the south, Tefft Street in the central area, and Los Berros Road/Thompson Road on the north. Recent traffic forecasts for the Nipomo area predict that the existing Tefft Street interchange and the existing Los Berros Road/Thompson Road interchanges will be inadequate to serve projected development during peak traffic periods. Motorists would be subjected to recurring congestion and delays due to increasing traffic on SR 101 and on the existing local street network. Of the three interchanges, only the Tefft Street interchange is located centrally to existing and planned developments. Los Berros Road/Thompson Road and Hutton Road (SR 166) are located at the fringe of future development.

As a residential, retirement, and service community, the Nipomo area has been growing at a rapid pace over the last several years. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the Nipomo area population increased 78 percent from year 1990 to year 2000, while the County's population increased by only 14 percent. This local and regional population growth has led to substantial increase in local and commuter traffic along SR 101. Traffic studies project that traffic operations at the Tefft Street and Los Berros Road/Thompson Road interchanges will worsen as traffic volumes increase.

The proposed project is consistent with long-range land use and circulation planning for the project study area and is consistent with the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. This project is listed in the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments' (SLOCOG) 2005 Regional Transportation Plan and SLOCOG's 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The ultimate concept for SR 101 is six-lanes per the 2001 Transportation Concept Report. This project will accommodate future widening of SR 101.

The Project Study Report was prepared by San Luis Obispo County in January 2000 and approved by the Department on February 6, 2000. The Draft Project Report was approved on February 29, 2008. The Project Report was approved on March 27, 2009.

The total escalated project cost (2012 dollars) is approximately \$40 million. Funding for the project will be provided by a combination of San Luis Obispo County Road Improvement Fee funds, Municipal Bonds, and the SLOCOG State Transportation Improvement Program funds in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

At the completion of the project, it is proposed that the Willow Road extension be relinquished to San Luis Obispo County.

The proposed Willow Road extension and new interchange to SR 101 are accepted and supported by the community who recognize the need for operational improvements within the project limits. Public hearings were held in May 2006 and on April 9, 2008. All comments received were addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

The fact sheet for Nonstandard Mandatory Design Features was approved on February 6, 2000. The fact sheet for Nonstandard Advisory Design Features was approved on November 5, 2007.

The California Environmental Quality Act has been satisfied by certification of the Environmental Impact Report prepared by the County of San Luis Obispo and certified on May 9, 2006. The Federal requirements were met when the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact was approved on March 27, 2009. The Commission approved the project for future consideration of funding on October 14, 2009, under Resolution E-09-85.

A superseding freeway agreement was adopted by the County of San Luis Obispo on September 22, 2009, and will be executed by the Department after Commission approval of the new connection.

Attachments:

Resolution S-742

Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection
5-SLO-101 PM 6.4**

Resolution S-742

WHEREAS, the County of San Luis Obispo has requested approval of a new public road connection on State Route 101 for Willow Road; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Luis Obispo per Resolution of Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, Resolution No. 2009-302, has committed to the funding and delivery of the new connection within five years of the California Transportation Commission's approval of this new public road connection; and

WHEREAS, the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact was approved on March 27, 2009 in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, the project will have impacts on the environment that will be mitigated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize one new public road connection on State Route 101 at Willow Road, Post Mile 6.4, in the county of San Luis Obispo.

