State of California
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

M e m o r a n d u m

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: January 19-20, 2011

Reference No.: 2.2c.(6)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Jay Norvell
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING**
10-SJ-4, PM 14.4/14.8 and T14.6/R15.7
RESOLUTION E-11-06

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-11-06.

ISSUE:

The attached resolution proposes to approve for consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- Route 4 in San Joaquin County – Roadway improvements including a new four lane roadway and viaduct on Route 4 near the city of Stockton (PPNO 0284)

This project in San Joaquin County will construct a new four lane roadway and structure (viaduct) from Fresno Avenue to a new interchange at Navy Drive. The project is programmed in the Trade Corridors Improvement Fund. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2012-13. Total estimated project cost is $193,640,000 for capital and support. The scope as described for the preferred alternative is consistent with the project scope set forth in the proposed project baseline agreement.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Because of the sensitivity of the resources in the project area, an Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the project. Project impacts to community character and cohesion, visual resources, and sensitive noise receptors cannot be mitigated to a below significance level; therefore a Statement of Overriding Considerations was prepared for the project. All other potential impacts associated with the project can be mitigated to below significance through proposed mitigation measures.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
10-SJ-4, PM 14.4/14.8 and T14.6/R15.7
Resolution E-11-06

1.1 **WHEREAS,** the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed a Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:

- Route 4 in San Joaquin County – Roadway improvements including a new four lane roadway and viaduct on Route 4 near the city of Stockton (PPNO 0284)

1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and

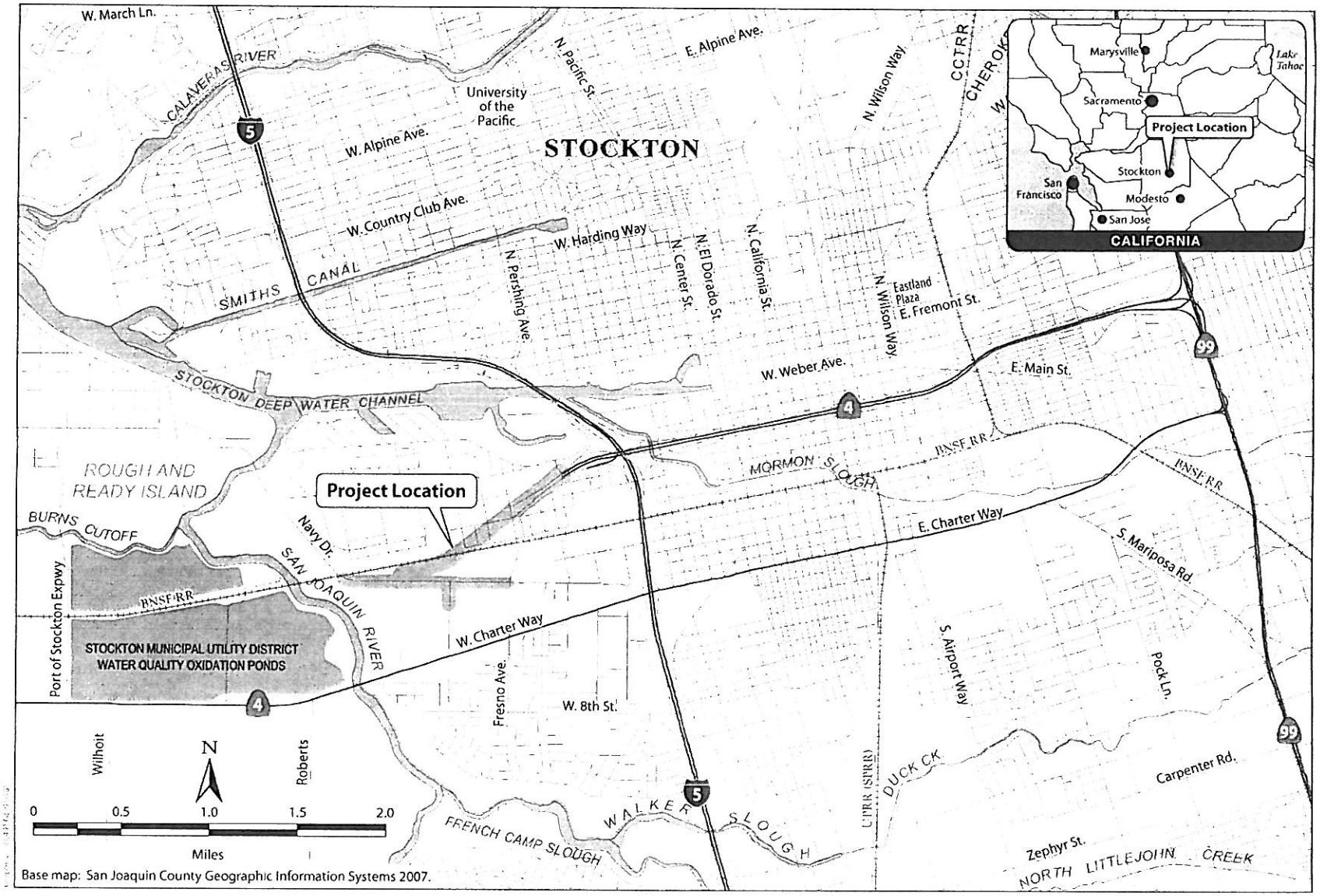
1.3 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Environmental Impact Report; and

1.4 **WHEREAS**, the Environmental Impact Report did identify significant effects after mitigation; and

1.5 **WHEREAS**, a Statement of Overriding Considerations was prepared; and

1.6 **WHEREAS,** Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines.

2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.



Base map: San Joaquin County Geographic Information Systems 2007.

FINDINGS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR THE STATE ROUTE 4 CROSSTOWN FREEWAY RAMP EXTENSION PROJECT (ALTERNATIVE 3A, TWIN VIADUCTS SUPPORTED BY COLUMNS) IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The following findings are made in compliance with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant and that require no mitigation have not been included in the findings.

Community Character and Cohesion

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project would construct a physical barrier (viaduct structure on columns) that would divide the Boggs Tract neighborhood into north and south sections, thereby isolating portions of the neighborhood, individuals, and community focal points. Placement of the viaduct would also obstruct partial views of the neighborhood. Finally, through access under the proposed elevated structure would also be altered with the establishment of cul-de-sacs on Del Norte Street between West Hazelton Avenue and West Scotts Avenue and on West Hazelton Avenue between South Los Angeles Avenue and Fresno Avenue.

Findings: Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provisions of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts: The following measures will be undertaken during project design to avoid or minimize impacts on community character and cohesion.

- Construction of new sidewalks along South Los Angeles Avenue from West Hazelton Street to just south of the proposed Caltrans right-or way.
- Construction of new sidewalks along portions of the east and west sides of Fresno Avenue to connect the existing segments of sidewalks on Fresno Avenue.

- Widening of roadway shoulder width to 5 feet along South Ventura Street and West Scotts Avenue.

These measures will improve pedestrian access and connectivity to the Boggs Tract Neighborhood. However, construction of the project will still divide the existing neighborhood into two sections. The above listed measures will therefore not reduce this impact below a level of significance.

Relocations

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Implementation of the project is expected to result in the displacement of 36 single-family residential units. These units are predominantly two- and three-bedrooms, with some units as large as five-bedrooms. In addition, one duplex would be acquired, resulting in the displacement and relocation of an additional two single-family residences. In terms of impacts on human beings, based on the estimated average household size in San Joaquin County of 3.1 persons, the project could potentially result in the relocation of up to 118 persons.

Implementation of the project would also require relocation of six businesses, including two auto salvage businesses, a bulk sugar transportation business/truck washing business (the bulk sugar transportation and truck washing businesses are part of the same parent company), machine equipments and parts business, and a convenience store. Partial acquisition of 10 industrial parcels would also be needed; resulting in the loss of approximately 35 parking spaces and storage space for auto salvage businesses.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be undertaken during project design to avoid or minimize impacts.

The Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program would reduce impacts as benefits are provided to relocate residences and businesses, reducing the level of impact to below a substantial level. A range of benefits is available; some include finding comparable replacement housing and paying for costs associated with moving. Details are identified at the time property is acquired. The Community Impact Assessment prepared for this project found that there is adequate replacement housing property in the same zip code as the project area. Moreover, the residential

replacement area is characterized as having similar or better street usage, accessibility, composition, utilities, landscaping, and proximity to transportation schools, shopping, health facilities, and religious centers as the project area.

Adequate replacement business properties are also expected to be available on the market for sale or rent. All affected businesses would receive relocation benefits and information on comparable properties for lease or purchase. Moreover, the Community Impact Assessment found that all business could benefit by moving within the Port-Downtown Redevelopment Area, Stockton/San Joaquin County Enterprise Zone, or South Stockton Redevelopment Project Area where City, County, and state assistance is available.

With implementation of the Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program, no significant impact to persons, businesses, or property access would result from construction of the project. All parties would be treated in a fair and equal manner as prescribed by Caltrans policy, the Federal Uniform Relocations Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (as amended), Title 49–Code of Federal Regulations–Part 24, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 US Code 2000d, et seq.). See Caltrans' Title VI Policy Statement in Appendix C of the EIR.

Visual/Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

1. Construction of the project would introduce considerable heavy equipment and associated vehicles, including dozers, graders, scrapers, pile drivers, and trucks, into the viewshed of residences, public roadways, and industrial areas. Safety and directional signage would also be a visible element. If nighttime construction is required, high-wattage lighting would illuminate the construction area. These activities would create temporary changes in views of and from the Project area.

2. Construction of the project would introduce a raised visual mass in a skyline visible to all viewer groups, where none presently exists. This structure would increase the amount of reflective surface present, where homes, vegetation, and sky previously existed. New lighting would also be introduced at the intersection of Navy and Tillie Lewis Drives and at the ramp intersection with Navy Drive. Views of the newly elevated structure and any increased light and glare would be in the line of direct sight following demolition of commercial and industrial lots on Navy Drive. Viewers in Boggs Tract would have the most exposure to this long-term change in visual character.

Findings:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

2. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provisions of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

1. The following measures will be undertaken during project design and construction to avoid or minimize impacts during construction.

    - The construction contractor will not schedule activities near residences on weekends after 6:00 p.m. or on weekdays to the maximum extent feasible so that the work does not continue past daylight hours (which vary according to season). If nighttime construction is required, light sources would be screened and directed away from residential areas as much as possible, and the number of nighttime lights would be minimized.
    - The construction contractor will install fencing or other structures (minimum height of six feet) to obstruct undesirable views of construction activities from residences adjacent to the construction site.

2. To minimize long-term visual impacts, landscaping will be added within the proposed Caltrans right-of-way between Fresno Avenue and South Ventura Avenue in Boggs Tract. The side slopes of the embankments will also be landscaped, as well as the area within the proposed Caltrans right-of-way at the southeast corner of South Los Angeles Avenue and West Hazelton Avenue. Landscaping would primarily be native species and would be planted within the first two years after construction.

    Light and glare will be minimized through the installation of street lights with the lowest height and wattage allowed under Caltrans and City requirements, screening lights away from residential areas, reducing the number of lights, and evaluating the need for safety lighting near underpasses and newly created cul-de-sacs. Low-sheen and non-reflective surface materials that match the colors to those found in established communities will also be used for the proposed retaining walls.

    These measures will improve the visual character of the project area. However, construction of the project will still introduce a raised visual mass in a skyline visible to all viewer groups, as well as increase sources of light and

glare. The above listed measures will therefore not reduce this impact below a level of significance.

Paleontology

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The proposed project is located on alluvium of the Calaveras River system. Based on regional geologic maps, alluvial/fluvial sediments of the Modesto Formation are also believed to be present at an unknown depth in the substrate. The Calaveras alluvium and Modesto Formation are considered highly sensitive for paleontological resources because of their potential to contain vertebrate fossils. Disturbance to paleontological resources could occur during ground disturbance related to construction of the project. The potential for impact would be greatest in the eastern portions of the project alignment where geologic mapping shows the alluvium of the Calaveras River and vicinity exposed at the surface.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be undertaken during project design and before construction to avoid or minimize impacts.

A project-specific Paleontological Evaluation Report will be prepared by a qualified paleontologist. The report will include an evaluation of site- and project-specific potential for impacts on paleontologically sensitive strata based on available geologic and geotechnical information; project design; proposed construction or maintenance methods, including the anticipated depths of disturbance; and existing site conditions, including preexisting disturbance, if any. The report will also identify mitigation measures as necessary to reduce or avoid impacts to sensitive resources. Mitigation would entail any combination of measures, including requiring that construction crews stop work if fossil materials are encountered.

Hazardous Waste or Materials

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The "Initial Site Assessment Update" for the proposed project identified 16 properties within or adjacent to the project that could expose construction workers to hazardous materials. The report further uncovered the following hazards in the project area:

- Aerially deposited lead in shallow soil within the unpaved shoulders and median of the existing Crosstown right-of-way and along unpaved surface street shoulders.
- Groundwater contamination.
- Residential agricultural chemicals.
- Potential for highly contaminated soils within the railroad right-of way.
- Potential for asbestos-materials and lead-containing paint in existing buildings.
- Potential for closed underground storage tanks at and near the properties proposed for full and partial acquisition.

Clearing, excavation, and grading associated with construction of the project could potentially expose construction workers to these hazardous materials and wastes.

Findings: Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be undertaken during project design and before construction to avoid or minimize impacts.

- Conduct investigations to identify specific avoidance and minimization measures in conformance with the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials. The investigation will include an aerially deposited lead study, asbestos-containing materials and lead-containing paint survey, and soil sampling on contaminated properties.
- Avoid identified sites with hazardous materials or waste contamination during roadway design. If the roadway must enter areas of known contamination, remediation and/or removal activities shall be conducted.
- Prepare a Site Management Program/Contingency Plan to address known and potential hazardous material issues, including but not limited to measures to address management of contaminated soil and groundwater; a site-specific health and safety plan; and procedures to protect the public and workers in the event that hazards are encountered.

Noise

Adverse Environmental Effects:

1. Noise from construction activities may occasionally dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. In general, construction

will be limited to daytime hours, except within the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and the Central California Traction Company railway rights-of-way. Modeling indicates that construction noise between 9 p/m and 6 p.m. will exceed the Caltrans Standard Special Provisions of 86 dBA at the nearest residences. Likewise, ground vibration from pile driving will exceed the Federal Transit Administration's limit of 0.2 inches per second.

2. Future roadway traffic associated with the project represents a constant and long-term source of noise. Modeling demonstrates that a total of 42 residents in Boggs Tract will be exposed to a 12-dB or greater increase in traffic noise levels relative to existing conditions. This exceeds Caltrans' standards of significance for future noise levels.

Findings:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

2. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provisions of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

1. To avoid or minimize noise impacts during construction, the contractor will ensure sound-control devices are implemented so that noise between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. does not exceed 86 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the nearest residence. Caltrans and/or the construction contractor will also implement measures to avoid vibration impacts from pile driving. If it is not feasible to reduce vibration to 0.2 inches per second, Caltrans will conduct a post-construction survey to identify damage caused by construction of the project. Caltrans would then repair all damage that is directly attributable to pile driving.

2. The construction of a soundwall on the proposed elevated structure was evaluated and found to be infeasible because it would not provide at least 5 dB of noise reduction. Therefore, mitigation would not be sufficient to reduce long-term noise levels at nearby residences below a level of significance.

Animal Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Two special-status species not listed under the California Endangered Species Act or Federal Endangered Species Act could occur in the project area: white-tailed kite and western burrowing owl. According to the California Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Database, there is one record for a white-tailed kite nest and 17 records for occurrences of burrowing owls within five miles of the project area. Noise and disturbance from project construction could disrupt white-tailed kite breeding, thereby resulting in the loss of reproductive potential, incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestling, or lead to nest abandonment. These same impacts, as well as permanent or temporary loss of foraging or burrow habitat, could also affect nesting burrowing owls.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be undertaken during project design and construction to avoid or minimize impacts to white-tailed-kite and burrowing owl.

- Conduct environmental awareness training for construction crews for both species before construction begins.
- Conduct construction prior to the migratory bird nesting season for white-tailed-kite (March 1 through September 1). If this is not possible, Caltrans or its contractors would conduct a preconstruction survey. If an active raptor nest is found, California Department of Fish and Game would be contacted to determine the need for a no-disturbance buffer or the need to monitor the nest.
- Conduct preconstruction surveys for active burrowing owl burrows according to California Department of Fish and Game guidelines. If no burrowing owls or sign are detected, no further mitigation is required. If burrowing owls or their sign are found, Caltrans or its contractors would implement the following mitigation measures.
- Burrowing owls and their occupied burrows would not be disturbed during the breeding season (February 1–August 31). A 250-foot buffer, within which no new activity would be permissible, would be maintained between Project activities and nesting owls. The nesting owls would be monitored periodically by a qualified biologist to ensure that nesting activities are not being disrupted.
- When destruction of occupied burrows is unavoidable during the nonbreeding season (September 1–January 31), eviction of owls may be permitted pending an evaluation of eviction plans and receipt of formal written approval from the California Department of Fish and Game authorizing the eviction.

- If impacts to burrowing owl cannot be avoided, the loss of burrowing, foraging and burrow habitat would be compensated for in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Game Guidelines (acquire and permanently protect a minimum of 6.5 acres of existing breeding and foraging habitat for each pair of owls affected).

Threatened and Endangered Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

According to the California Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Database and general biological surveys of the project area, the following threatened and endangered species could occur in the project area: vernal pool fairy shrimp, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and Swainson's Hawk.

Five elderberry shrubs containing a total of 16 stems with diameters measuring greater than 1.0 inch at ground level are located within the project area. With regard to Swainson's Hawk, there are more than 40 records of nests within five miles of the proposed project, the closest of which is within one mile.

Project construction would generate dust that could adversely affect the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Likewise, if construction occurs adjacent to an active Swainson's Hawk's nest tree, disturbance could cause the death of young, loss of reproductive potential, incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or lead to nest abandonment.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be undertaken during project design and construction to avoid or minimize impacts to valley elderberry longhorn beetle and Swainson's Hawk.

- Ensure that dust is controlled during construction by periodically watering down construction areas within 100 feet of the elderberry shrubs to prevent dirt from becoming air borne and accumulating on these shrubs.
- Conduct environmental awareness training for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle and the Swainson's hawk to construction crews before project implementation.

- Conduct construction prior to the migratory bird nesting season (March 1 through September 1). If this is not possible, Caltrans or its contractors would conduct a preconstruction survey to determine whether active nests are present within or adjacent to the project area. If an active raptor nest is found, California Department of Fish and Game would be contacted to determine the need for a no-disturbance buffer or the need to monitor the nest.

Alternatives

Findings:

Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provisions of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the project alternatives identified in the FEIR

Statement of Facts:

The No-Project Alternative is infeasible because it does not meet any of the project objectives, as described in section 1.3.11 of the EIR.

- Improve the connection between Interstate 5/Crosstown Freeway, the Port of Stockton, and adjacent industrial uses: As shown in Table 2.1.5-1 of the EIR, the 2035 No-Build condition would result in unacceptable levels of service at intersections between Interstate 5, the Port, and adjacent industrial uses.

- Reduce the amount of industrial truck traffic through the residential Boggs Tract neighborhood. As shown if Figure 2.1.5-4 of the EIR, traffic volumes in Boggs Tract would be substantially higher under 2035 No-Build conditions than under the proposed project.

- Improve local air quality. As shown in Table 2.2.6-4 of the EIR, operational emissions would be greater under 2035 No-Build conditions than under the proposed project.

Alternative 3B would have higher construction and maintenance costs than the proposed project and would result in greater environmental impacts related to community character and cohesion and long-term visual impacts. Therefore, Alternative 3B is determined to be infeasible.

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATEMENT FOR THE STATE ROUTE 4 CROSSTOWN FREEWAY RAMP EXTENSION PROJECT (ALTERNATIVE 3A, TWIN VIADUCTS SUPPORTED BY COLUMNS) IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

This Statement of Overriding Considerations is made in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15903), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

CEQA requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered "acceptable" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093).

Selected Alternative

Caltrans considered all comments received during the public circulation period, which began on February 4, 2010 and closed on March 22, 2010. Following the close of the comment period, Caltrans identified Alternative 3A (twin viaducts supported by columns) as the preferred alternative. Caltrans concluded this following consideration of the results of the Draft EIR concerning purpose and need, environmental impacts, and input provided by agencies, individuals, and organizations.

The purpose of the project is to:

- Improve the connection between Interstate 5/Crosstown Freeway, the Port, and adjacent industrial uses;
- Reduce the amount of industrial truck traffic through the residential Boggs Tract neighborhood; and
- Improve local air quality.

Both Alternatives 3A and 3B (elevated structure atop an earthen embankment supported by two retaining walls) would achieve the project purposes by providing an elevated structure spanning the Boggs Tract neighborhood and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway corridor. The alternatives are identical except for the section of elevated structure that spans Boggs Tract from just west of Del Norte Street to just east of Fresno Avenue.

Alternatives 3A and 3B would also have nearly identical environmental impacts except for that Alternative 3A is expected to have fewer impacts related to community character and cohesion and long-term visual impacts. Under Alternative 3A, partial views between north and south sections of the Boggs Tract neighborhood would be available underneath the viaducts, whereas the retaining wall structure under Alternative 3B would prevent views from one side of the neighborhood to the other. Therefore, Alternative 3A is judged to be the environmentally superior build alternative.

Alternative 3B would also have higher construction and maintenance costs than Alternative 3A.

The No-Build Alternative would not meet the project purpose as described below:

- The No-Build Alternative would not Improve the connection between Interstate 5/Crosstown Freeway, the Port of Stockton, and adjacent industrial uses: As shown in Table 2.1.5-1 of the EIR, the 2035 No-Build condition would result in unacceptable levels of service at intersections between Interstate 5, the Port, and adjacent industrial uses.

- The No-Build Alternative would not reduce the amount of industrial truck traffic through the residential Boggs Tract neighborhood. As shown if Figure 2.1.5-4 of the EIR, traffic volumes in Boggs Tract would be substantially higher under 2035 No-Build conditions than under the proposed project.

- The No-Build Alternative would not improve local air quality. As shown in Table 2.2.6-4 of the EIR, operational emissions would be greater under 2035 No-Build conditions than under the proposed project.

The No-Build Alternative would also be inconsistent with the City of Stockton's General Plan and the San Joaquin Council of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan.

Caltrans has identified Alternative 3A as the preferred alternative since it is environmental superior and has lower construction and maintenance costs than Alternative 3B. In identifying Alternative 3A as the preferred alternative, Caltrans has also considered the fact that the public has not specified a preference for one alternative over the other.

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts of Alternative 3A

The following impacts associated with Alternative 3A have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

Community Character and Cohesion – The project would construct a physical barrier (viaduct structure on columns) that would divide the Boggs Tract neighborhood into north and south sections, thereby isolating portions of the

neighborhood, individuals, and community focal points. Placement of the viaduct would also obstruct partial views of the neighborhood. Finally, through access under the proposed elevated structure would also be altered with the establishment of cul-de-sacs on Del Norte Street between West Hazelton Avenue and West Scotts Avenue and on West Hazelton Avenue between South Los Angeles Avenue and Fresno Avenue. As identified in the EIR, the introduction of this physical barrier would be considered significant and unavoidable impact on community character and cohesion.

Long-Term Visual Impacts – Construction of the project would introduce a raised visual mass in a skyline visible to all viewer groups, where none presently exists. This structure would increase the amount of reflective surface present, where homes, vegetation, and sky previously existed. New lighting would also be introduced at the intersection of Navy and Tillie Lewis Drives and at the ramp intersection with Navy Drive. Views of the newly elevated structure and any increased light and glare would be in the line of direct sight following demolition of commercial and industrial lots on Navy Drive. Viewers in Boggs Tract would have the most exposure to this long-term change in visual character. As identified in the EIR, this long-term change would be considered a significant and unavoidable impact to the visual character of the project area.

Long-Term Traffic Noise Impacts – Future roadway traffic associated with the project represents a constant and long-term source of noise. A total of 42 residents in Boggs Tract will be exposed to a 12-dB or greater increase in traffic noise levels relative to existing conditions. This exceeds Caltrans' standards of significance for future noise levels. The construction of a soundwall on the proposed elevated structure was evaluated in the EIR and found to be infeasible because it would not provide at least 5 dB of noise reduction. Therefore, mitigation would not be sufficient to reduce long-term noise levels at nearby residences below a level of significance.

Statement of Overriding Considerations

The statement of overriding considerations describes those benefits of the project that make it acceptable. For the reasons stated below Caltrans finds that the projects unavoidable environmental impacts are acceptable in light of the projects benefits.

The project would improve the existing poor connection between Interstate 5 and the Port. Without the project, this connection is expected to degrade even further as the Port of Stockton grows. The Port is now the third largest inland port on the West Coast. Plans to deepen the channel to allow increased movement of goods and development of the 1,400-acre West Complex is expected to increase traffic volumes in the area to approximately 54,000 vehicular trips per day by 2035 worsening the existing poor connection between Interstate 5 and the Port. The project would reduce the vehicle-hours of delay by 38 percent in the 2035 morning peak hour and by 45 percent in the 2035 evening peak hour in the project area.

The project would also reduce truck traffic in the Boggs Tract neighborhood. Currently, an estimated 4,400 daily trucks bound for the Port and adjacent warehouse and industrial facilities use the residential streets in the Boggs Tract neighborhood, primarily Fresno Avenue and West Washington Street. This traffic causes noise, air quality, visual, traffic and pedestrian safety, and congestion impacts for the residents. These impacts would worsen as traffic through the neighborhood increases with development of the Port's West Complex, adjacent industrial uses, and the region in general. After completion of the project, Port and industrial traffic would be carried directly to Navy Drive without using the surface streets of the Boggs Tract neighborhood. Trucks would have a more direct and shorter route and could take Navy Drive directly to Washington Street well west of the boundary of the neighborhood.

The project area is located in area that has been classified as an extreme nonattainment area for the federal 1-hour ozone standard, serious nonattainment area for the federal 8-hour ozone standard, moderate maintenance area for the federal carbon monoxide standard, serious maintenance area for the federal PM10 standard, and nonattainment for the federal PM2.5 standard. The project is expected to reduce the emissions of air pollutants in the Boggs Tract neighborhood as Port and industrial traffic use the Crosstown Freeway ramp extension in preference to local roads in the neighborhood. With construction of the project, emissions are expected to decrease in 2015 and 2035 as follows: reactive organic gases are expected to decrease by 52 percent reduction in 2015 and 32 percent in 2035; nitric oxides are expected to reduce by 53 percent in 2015 and in 2035; carbon monoxide would reduce by 53 percent in 2015 and in 2035; PM10 would reduce by 52 percent in 2015 and in 2035; PM2.5 would reduce by 52 percent in 2015 and in 2035; and carbon dioxide by 53 percent in 2015 and in 2035.