

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 8, 2013

Reference No.: 2.2c.(2)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

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Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING**
04-Sol-80; PM 10.8/17.0, 04-Sol-680, PM 10.1/13.1, 04-Sol-12, PM 1.7/L2.8;
04-Sol-12, PM L1.8/4.
RESOLUTION E-13-02

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolutions E-13-02.

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:

- Interstates 80 and 680, and State Route 12 in Solano County. Construct roadway improvements including road widening interchange improvements along Interstates 80 and 680, and State Route 12 near the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City. (PPNO 50301Q)

This project in Solano County will improve the Interstate 80/680/State Route 12 Interchange, including the relocation of the westbound truck scales facility on Interstate 80. For the preferred full-build alternative, the current-total estimated cost for capital and support is \$1,348,400,000. The project is not fully funded and will be developed in phases. Only Phase One of the full-build alternative is included in the financially constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Within Phase One, the first construction contract's total estimated cost for capital and support is \$100,400,000, which is funded by-the 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP),-the Trade Corridor Improvement Funds (TCIF) and local funding. The scope of the first construction contract includes the reconstruction of the Interstate 80/Green Valley Interchange and construction of a two lane westbound Interstate 80 to westbound State Route 12 Connector with a new bridge over the Interstate 80 Green Valley Road onramp. Construction is estimated to begin in fiscal year 2013-2014. The scope of the preferred alternative is consistent with the scope of the first construction contract that is programmed in the 2012 STIP and the TCIF.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources that may be impacted by the project include; farmland, residential and commercial displacements, aesthetic,

cultural, water quality and stormwater runoff, paleontological noise, and biological resources. Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance through proposed mitigation measures. As a result, a Final Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the project.

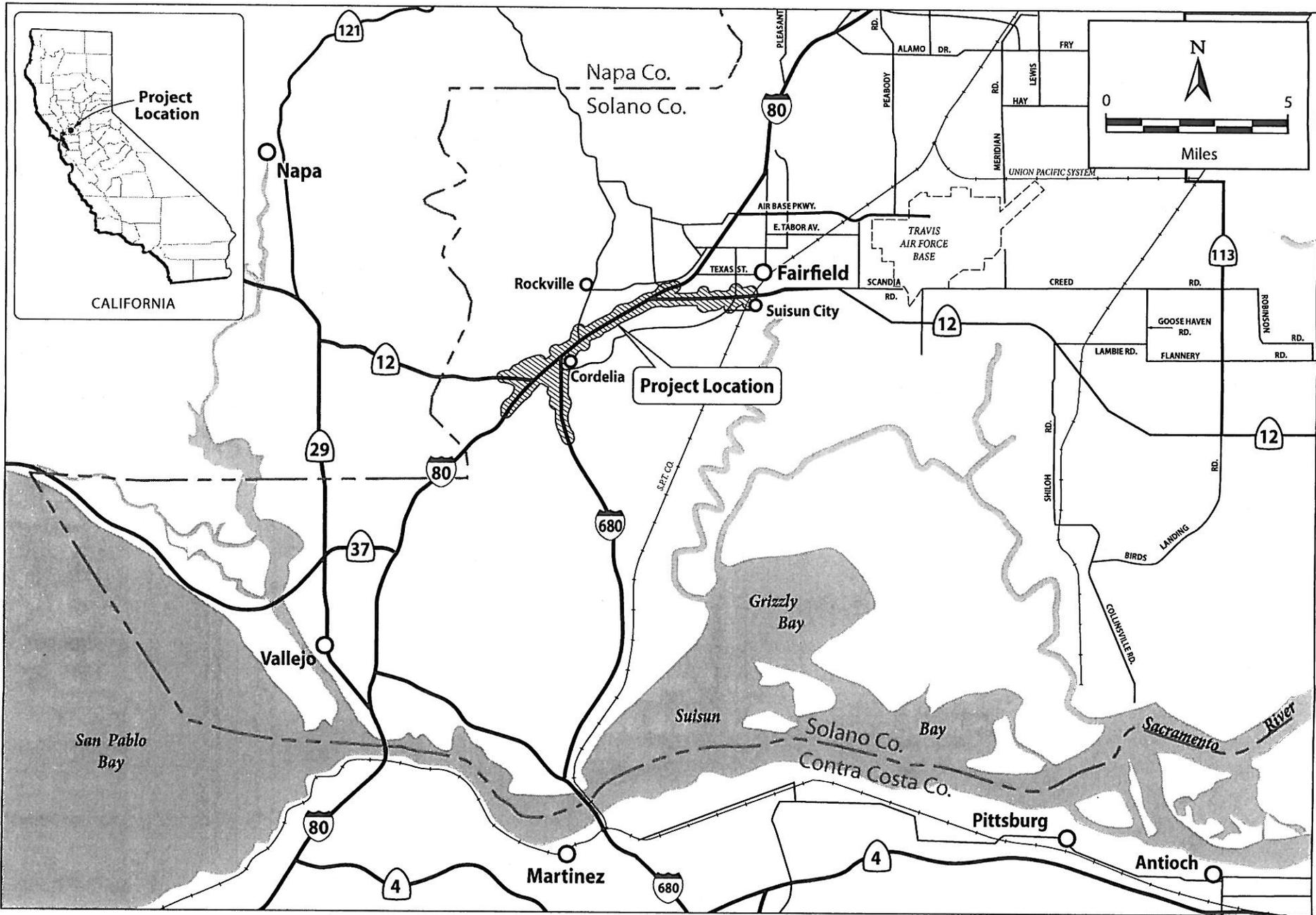
Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding 04-Sol-80; PM 10.8/17.0, 04-Sol-680, PM 10.1/13.1, 04-Sol-12, PM 1.7/L2.8; 04-Sol-12, PM L1.8/4.8 Resolution E-13-02

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

 - Interstates 80 and 680, and State Route 12 in Solano County. Construct roadway improvements including road widening interchange improvements along Interstates 80 and 680, and State Route 12 near the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City. (PPNO 50301Q)
- 1.2** **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Final 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 Final Environmental Impact Report; and
- 1.4** **WHEREAS**, Findings were made pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines; and
- 1.5** **WHEREAS**, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.
- 2.1** **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby approve the above referenced project to allow for future consideration of funding.



Graphics... 02 106 04 EIS (P-02)

Figure 1-1
Project Location

FINDINGS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR INTERSTATE 80/INTERSTATE 680/STATE ROUTE 12 INTERCHANGE PROJECT *Construct roadway widening and interchange improvements along Interstate 80/ Interstate 680/State Route 12, near the cities of Fairfield and Suisun City.*

Introduction

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a) and Public Resources Code Section 21002 provide that no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an environmental impact report (EIR) has been certified when one or more significant environmental effects of the project have been identified, unless the public agency makes written findings for each of those significant effects, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale for each finding. These findings explain the disposition of each of the significant effects, including those that will be less than significant with mitigation. The findings must be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

There are three possible findings under Section 15091(a). The public agency must make one or more of these findings for each significant effect. The third finding must be made when rejecting any of the alternatives analyzed in the EIR.

The Section 15091(a) findings are:

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 final EIR.
2. Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

Findings

There are a number of environmental commitments included as part of the Interstate 80/Interstate 680/State Route 12 Interchange Project (project). These commitments will be incorporated into the construction plans and specifications. As detailed in Chapter 4, California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation, of the project's Final EIR/environmental impact statement (EIS), these environmental commitments enable the project to avoid most significant environmental effects without the need for mitigation measures.

The only significant effect under CEQA is the direct conversion of Important Farmlands to a non-agricultural use.

Impact Findings

Impact: Direct Conversion of Important Farmlands

The project will result in the permanent conversion of Important Farmlands as a result of widening access-controlled freeway segments.

Finding:

Mitigation has been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR/EIS.

Statement of Facts:

The Final EIR/EIS includes the following mitigation measure to reduce the impact of converting Important Farmland, including Prime Farmland that will result from the project, to a less than significant level:

Compensation for Conversion of Important Farmland

The Department will mitigate for an agricultural impact, on a case by case basis, in a quantity or ratio according to professional judgment based on local plans, the type of farmland, and economic impacts. In this project, important farmland (“Prime Farmland”) will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio (one acre protected for every one acre affected). Farmlands under an agricultural conservation easement will be mitigated at a slightly higher ratio, 1.25:1.

The mitigation ratios cited in this measure are based on mitigation ratios contained in the Final EIR for the North Connector Project (certified by the Solano Transportation Authority [STA] in May 2008) and the Final EIR for the I-80 Eastbound Cordelia Truck Scales Relocation Project (certified by the STA, December 2009). These ratios were found by the Department to be appropriate for the Interstate 80/Interstate 680/State Route 12 Interchange Project because the North Connector Project and I-80 Eastbound Cordelia Truck Scales Relocation Project occur in the same general area (Suisun Valley) and represent the most recent and relevant precedent for mitigation of agricultural impacts associated with transportation projects in Solano County. The Final EIRs for the abovementioned project can be found at the following web address:

- North Connector Project Final EIR:
http://www.sta.ca.gov/Content/10086/North_Connector.html
- I-80 Eastbound Cordelia Truck Scales Relocation Project Final EIR:
http://www.sta.ca.gov/Content/10079/I80_Eastbound_Cordelia_Truck_Scales_Relocation_Project.html

This mitigation measure is both feasible and practical. Solano County, where the project is located, has a tradition of mitigating the conversion of agricultural land in a similar manner. The current Solano County General Plan identifies 10 agricultural regions and the County and is in the process of developing strategic plans for the conservation of each of those areas. General Plan policies also include the establishment of “community separators” of preserved farmland between its cities and eventual adoption of a County farmland mitigation ordinance. The County’s support for agricultural preservation will provide opportunities for the acquisition of

conservation easements in areas that are slated for permanent preservation. In addition, the non-profit Solano Land Trust provides a means of ensuring that agricultural land is protected. Since its founding in 1986, the Solano Land Trust has permanently protected 20,041 acres of land in Solano County through the acquisition of land and of conservation easements. Funds donated to the Solano Land Trust would implement the mitigation measure to compensate for the conversion of Important Farmland.