

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: June 24-25, 2020

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.3b., Action Item

Prepared By: Janice Benton, Chief
Division of Design

Subject: NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION, 08-RIV-10-PM 45.8
RESOLUTION S-765

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached Resolution S-765 and map authorizing a new public road connection to Interstate 10 (I-10) at Portola Avenue, in the city of Palm Desert, in the county of Riverside?

RECOMMENDATION:

The City of Palm Desert and County of Riverside have requested approval of a new public road connection to I-10. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the California Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway or controlled access highway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the California Department of Transportation (Department) Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of a new public road connection to I-10 at Portola Avenue, Post Mile (PM) 45.8.

Recommended by:

MICHAEL KEEVER
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND:

The County of Riverside, in cooperation with the City of Palm Desert and the Department, proposes to construct a new public road connection to I-10 at Portola Avenue in the City of Palm Desert. The proposed new connection will provide a facility that efficiently serves future traffic demands due to planned urban development within the northern portion of the City of Palm Desert, reduce traffic congestion on parallel roadways, and reduce overall travel time in the vicinity of the study area between the adjacent Monterey Avenue and Cook Street interchanges.

I-10 is a major east-west freeway that begins at State Route 1 in Santa Monica, California and terminates at Interstate 95 in Jacksonville, Florida. Within San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, I-10 is 194.8 miles in length, extending easterly from the City of Montclair to the City of Blythe, California, at the Arizona state line. I-10 was adopted as a freeway by the California Highway Commission on July 15, 1952 and July 22, 1953. I-10 provides interstate and interregional movement of people and goods within the counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside. Through San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, I-10 is part of the National Highway System and Strategic Highway Corridor Network and is classified as a Goods Movement Route.

The route varies from two to four lanes in each direction. Traffic using the route consists of commuter, commercial, and recreational vehicles. Considerable development and the resulting increase in traffic in the Coachella Valley and in the city of Palm Desert led to the initiation of a new connection to I-10. Portola Avenue is classified as an arterial within the General Plan of the City of Palm Desert. The City of Palm Desert's General Plan also identifies Portola Avenue as the location for a new connection.

I-10 through the project area is a six-lane divided freeway with three 12-foot lanes in the eastbound and westbound directions. The inside shoulder width is five feet in the westbound direction and eight feet in the eastbound direction. The outside shoulder width is ten feet, and the median is unpaved with an average width of 46 feet. The southern right-of-way boundary abuts Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way.

The proposed project will extend Portola Avenue, a north-to-south arterial, northerly from Dinah Shore Drive to Varner Road and construct a new interchange at I-10 (PM 45.8). The new interchange will be approximately 1.2 miles east of the Monterey Avenue interchange and 1.2 miles west of the Cook Street interchange. Auxiliary lanes on I-10 will also be constructed between the new Portola Avenue and the adjacent interchanges.

The I-10/Portola Avenue Interchange project originated in the planning stages (2002-2003) as developments within the City of Palm Desert pushed toward the I-10 corridor, taking advantage of the available vacant land along the northern city limits. In July 2002, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments Executive Committee approved the inclusion of the interchange project in the Transportation Project Prioritization Study. The Project Study Report for the

I-10/Portola Avenue interchange in the City of Palm Desert was approved by the Department on April 28, 2005.

The interchange and associated improvements address both current and future traffic demands in the region. The construction of a new interchange at Portola Avenue will improve the operations of the adjacent interchanges and arterial roads by providing a new point of direct access to I-10. Traffic studies indicate that the new connection will not adversely impact the safety and operations of I-10, and no other measures need to be considered in addition to the proposed auxiliary lanes. The interchange should operate at an acceptable level of service through 2040. Furthermore, traffic operations at the neighboring arterial intersections are expected to improve.

The community has expressed support for the construction of the new interchange at Portola Avenue, and there is no known opposition to the project.

The current cost for construction, construction support, and right-of-way acquisition is \$60.7, \$7.2 and \$5.2 million, respectively. The project is anticipated to be funded through a combination of local funds and federal funding sources, such as Surface Transportation Program funds.

The Draft Project Report was approved on November 30, 2017. An open-house-style public hearing was held on December 19, 2017. The Department is the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The Initial Study with Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact was approved on April 17, 2018. The Project Report was approved by the Department on April 20, 2018. On April 25, 2018 the Notice of Determination was filed. The Federal Highway Administration completed the engineering and operations review for this project and approved the Final Interchange Access Request proposed for I-10 on September 4, 2019. The Commission accepted the Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment, joint CEQA/NEPA, report and approved the request for future consideration of funding by Resolution E-20-28 on May 13, 2020.

There are no relinquishments as part of this proposal. The County has agreed to quitclaim portions of County right-of-way needed for construction of the interchange.

A freeway agreement between the Department and Riverside County was signed by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on October 1, 2019. The freeway agreement will be executed by the Department after the Commission's approval of the new public road connection.

Attachments:
Resolution S-765
Location Map

*“Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system
to enhance California’s economy and livability”*

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection

08-RIV-10 PM 45.8

Resolution S-765

WHEREAS, the County of Riverside, the City of Palm Desert, and the California Department of Transportation (Department) jointly request approval of a new public road connection to Interstate 10 at Portola Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Department completed the Initial Study with Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact approved on April 17, 2018 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and to the National Environmental Protection Act; and

WHEREAS, the Department approved a Project Report recommending the new public road connection to Interstate 10 on April 20, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the California Transportation Commission accepted the Initial Study with Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact and approved the project to allow future consideration of funding for the construction of the new public road connection on May 13, 2020.

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 a new public road connection to Interstate 10 at Portola Avenue, Post Mile 45.8, in the city of Palm Desert, in Riverside County.

NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTION 08-RIV-10-PM 45.8

