

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: March 21-22, 2024

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.2c.(8), Action Item

Prepared By: Jeremy Ketchum, Chief
Division of Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF A PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING
RESOLUTION E-24-25**

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-24-25?

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission, as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-24-25.

BACKGROUND:

05-SCr-1, PM 8.1/10.7 Resolution E-24-25

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

- State Route (SR) 1 in Santa Cruz County. Widen SR 1 to include auxiliary lanes, accommodate bus-on-shoulder operations between the Freedom Boulevard and State Park Drive interchanges, and construct Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 in the community of Aptos, in Santa Cruz County. (PPNO 0073D)

The project is located on SR 1 from postmile (PM) 8.1 to PM 10.7, in Santa Cruz County. The Department proposes to widen SR 1 to include auxiliary lanes, accommodate bus-on-shoulder operations between the Freedom Boulevard and State Park Drive interchanges, and construct Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 in the community of Aptos. The project is currently programmed in the 2022 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The total programmed amount which includes Right of Way (Capital), and Construction (Capital and Support) is \$134,036,000 from STIP, Regional Improvement Program and SB 1 Local Partnership Program. Construction

*“Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that
serves all people and respects the environment.”*

is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2025-26. The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope as programmed by the Commission in the 2022 STIP.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff. Resources in the project area that may be impacted by the project include biological, cultural, and paleontological resources. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will reduce any potential effects on the environment. These measures include, but are not limited to, biological surveys and monitoring, restoration for impacts to native vegetation and sensitive habitat in accordance with regulatory permits, and cultural and paleontological monitoring, surveys, and trainings to avoid impacts to sensitive resources. Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significant except for aesthetics, for which a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act was prepared. As a result, an FEIR was prepared for the project.

Attachments

Attachment 1

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding

05-SCr-1, PM 8.1/10.7

Resolution E-24-25

- 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:
- SR 1 in Santa Cruz County. Widen SR 1 to include auxiliary lanes, accommodate bus-on-shoulder operations between the Freedom Boulevard and State Park Drive interchanges, and construct Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 in the community of Aptos, in Santa Cruz County. (PPNO 0073D)
- 1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that a 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.
- 1.4 **WHEREAS**, the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- 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.

Attachment 2

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Transportation Commission
Attn: Cherry Zamora
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-4245

Subject: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 of the Public Resources Code.

Project Title: State Route 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Improvements – Freedom Blvd. to State Park Dr. – and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project

2020090347	Lara Bertaina	(805) 779-0792
State Clearinghouse Number	Lead Agency Contact Person	Area Code/Telephone

Project Location (include county): State Route (SR) 1 from Postmile (PM) 8.1 to PM 10.7, in Santa Cruz County.

Project Description: Widen SR 1 to include auxiliary lanes, accommodate bus-on-shoulder operations between the Freedom Boulevard and State Park Drive interchanges, and construct Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 in the community of Aptos, in Santa Cruz County.

This is to advise that the California Transportation Commission has approved the above described project on ☐ Lead Agency/ ☒ Responsible Agency)

March 21-22, 2024, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

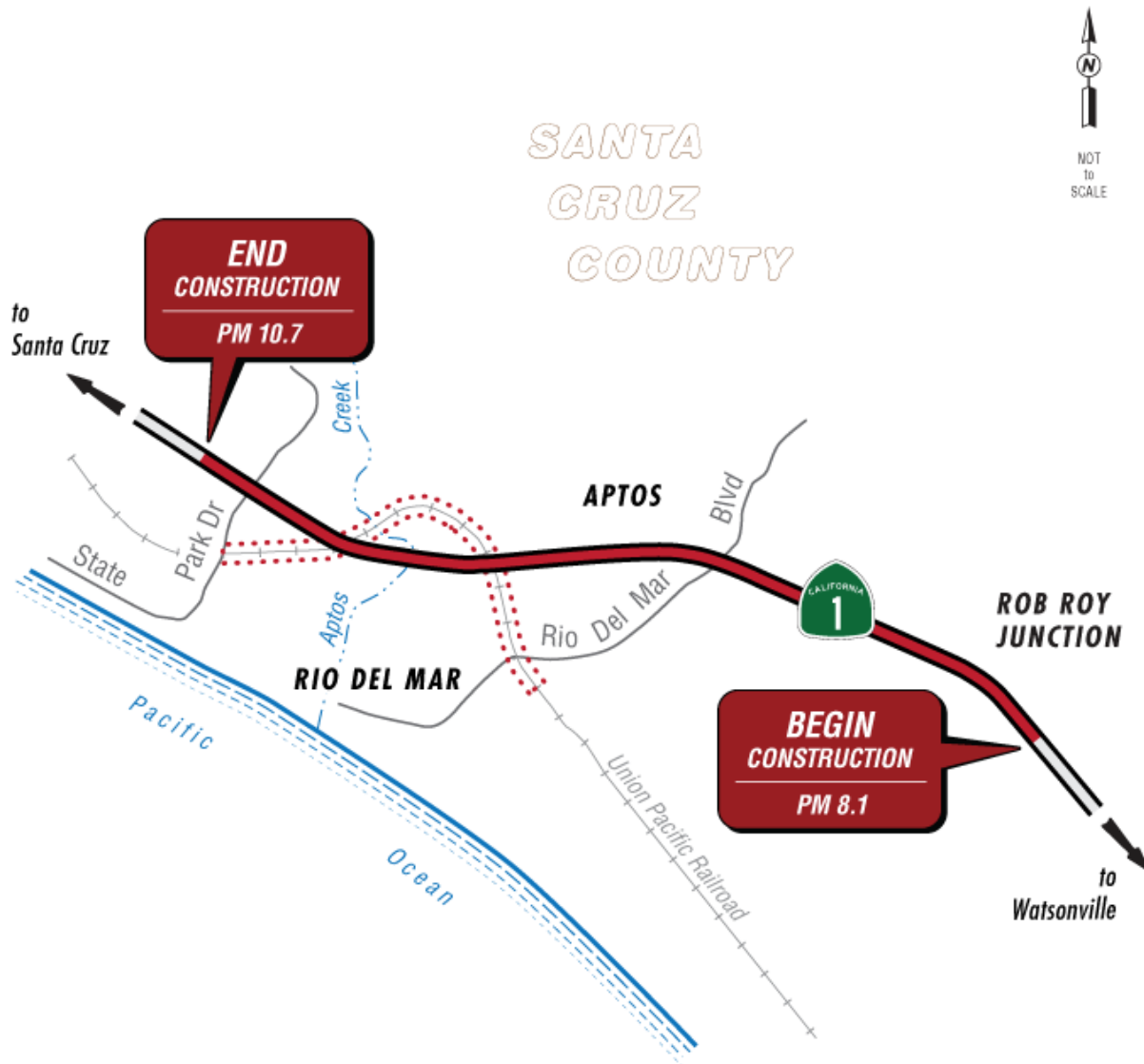
1. The project (☒ will/ ☐ will not) have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☒ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
☐ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. Mitigation reporting or monitoring plan (☒ was / ☐ was not) adopted for this project.
5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations (☒ was / ☐ was not) adopted for this project.
6. Findings (☒ were/ ☐ were not) made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

The above identified document with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at: Caltrans District 5, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

TANISHA TAYLOR		Executive Director
<i>Signature (Public Agency)</i>	<i>Date</i>	California Transportation Commission
		<i>Title</i>

Date received for filing at OPR:

Attachment 3



State Route 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Improvements—Freedom Blvd. to State Park Dr.—and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project



Project Name: State Route 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Improvements-
Freedom Blvd. to State Park Dr.-and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12

DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 05-SCR-1-8.1-10.7

EA: 05-0C734

EFIS ID: 0520000083

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS**

FOR

**STATE ROUTE 1 AUXILIARY LANES IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BETWEEN
FREEDOM BOULEVARD (PM 8.1) TO STATE PARK DRIVE (10.7) AND THE
COASTAL RAIL TRAIL SEGMENT 12**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15093), and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following impacts have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

- **Aesthetics.** The project would require vegetation removal for the widening and potential construction of soundwalls and retaining walls, which would result in moderate to moderate-high visual impacts. The changes from construction and operation could result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and scenic resources.

Overriding considerations that support approval of this recommended project are as follows:

The purpose and objectives of the project are to reduce delay and improve system reliability and safety along State Route 1, improve traffic operational movements, local circulation, and transit operations, enhance bicycle and pedestrian connections, promote use of alternative modes of transportation, and provide Coastal Rail Trail access across State Route 1.

The project is needed because traffic volumes for the peak directions on State Route 1 are approaching or equal to the capacity of the freeway. This has resulted in several bottlenecks along State Route 1 in the northbound and southbound directions that cause delays during peak hours, substantially delaying drivers. As a result, traffic on local streets—or “cut-through” traffic—is increasing because drivers are seeking to avoid delays on State Route 1. There are also currently insufficient incentives to



increase transit service and therefore use in the State Route 1 corridor because delay threatens reliability and cost-effective transit service delivery. Adding auxiliary lanes will improve the merge/diverge operations and reduce collisions.

There are limited opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely cross State Route 1 and navigate the project corridor, even though portions of the project area are designated as regional bicycle routes. Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 would provide new access to Aptos Village and across State Route 1 for bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel. The new trail overcrossings of State Route 1 would provide high-visibility pedestrian and bicycle crossing facilities and improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the areas on the north and south sides of the State Route 1 corridor.

Scott Eades

District Director (or designee)

Signature

02/20/2024

Date



Project Name: State Route 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Improvements-
Freedom Blvd. to State Park Dr.-and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12

DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 05-SCR-1-8.1-10.7

EA: 05-0C734

EFIS ID: 0520000083

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS

FOR

STATE ROUTE 1 AUXILIARY LANES IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BETWEEN FREEDOM BOULEVARD (PM 8.1) TO STATE PARK DRIVE (10.7) AND THE COASTAL RAIL TRAIL SEGMENT 12

The project includes the widening of State Route 1 between post mile 8.1 to post mile 10.7 in the County of Santa Cruz to include auxiliary lanes and to accommodate Bus-on-Shoulder operations between the Freedom Boulevard/State Park Drive interchanges, and to construct Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail. Moosehead Drive to the south of State Route 1, south of Aptos Creek would be realigned where it runs parallel to State Route 1 and a new retaining wall would be placed along the outside freeway shoulder to support the realignment. The project would include replacement of two Santa Cruz Branch Line railroad bridges over State Route 1 and widening of the State Route 1 bridge (on the south side only) over Aptos Creek and Spreckels Drive. This project is currently programmed through the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Improvement Plan and the State Transportation Improvement Program

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). 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 have not been included.

Aesthetics

Scenic Vistas and Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

State Route 1 is an eligible state scenic highway, meaning it is eligible for future listing on the State Scenic Highways system but has not been officially designated. Within the

County of Santa Cruz, State Route 1 is designated as a scenic road, valued for its vistas. Within the project vicinity, scenic vistas are available where the roadway viewing position allows visual access to the hillsides and ridgelines. Roadway widening would have a moderate impact on the scenic quality of the project location. The County of Santa Cruz also has a tree removal policy, restricting the removal of healthy trees unless they pose a traffic hazard or for road widening, and the replacement of trees nearby is required. These designations and policies suggest high local aesthetic values. The project would require vegetation removal for the widening, retaining walls, and possible construction of soundwalls, which would result in moderate to moderate-high impacts to the visual quality of the corridor. Therefore, the changes from construction and operation could result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and scenic resources. However, the Project would not affect the eligibility of State Route 1 to be listed on the State Scenic Highways system.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The build alternatives considered for the project would result in the same level of effect on the existing visual character and visual quality of the area; therefore, selection of a different build alternative would not reduce the effect. The no-build alternative would avoid the impact, but fails to meet key project objectives. Measures AMM-VA1 through AMM VA-18 will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and mitigate project impacts on the existing visual character and visual quality. However, permanent impacts would remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of the measures. The full text of each of the following measures is included in the Final EIR.

Biological Resources

Special-Status-Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

There are seven special-status species with potential to occur in the Biological Study Area: California red-legged frog, Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo, Central California coast steelhead distinct population segment, and tidewater goby. None of these seven species were observed in the Biological Study Area during the survey effort, but they have potential to occur in or near the Biological Study Area; this impact is potentially significant.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be implemented to reduce potential impacts on these species to less than significant. Additionally, the project would qualify for coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved under the Federal Aid Program, 8-8-10-F-58 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2011), which provides approved avoidance and minimization, and/or mitigation measures for California red-legged frogs. Such measures include but are not limited to: Service-approved biologists participating in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frog, a qualified biologist conducting 2 years of preconstruction surveys according to Service protocol surveys for Santa Cruz long-toed salamander, focused surveys following the Service survey guidelines for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher, and measures applied to aquatic habitats would apply to Central California coast steelhead and tidewater goby. The full text of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are included in the Final EIR.

Natural Community Habitat

Adverse Environmental Effects:

About 0.081 acre of riparian woodland habitat would be permanently removed, and 1.471 acres would be temporarily disturbed to build the project.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

Implementation of Best Management Practices, as well as the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures AMM-BIO-1 through AMM-BIO-16 and AMM-BIO-18 through AMM-BIO-21, and Mitigation Measures BIO-17, BIO-22, and BIO-24, would ensure this impact would be less than significant with mitigation. The full text of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are included in the Final EIR.

Wetlands and Other Waters

Adverse Environmental Effects:

This project would result in 0 acre of permanent impacts and about 0.226 acre of temporary impacts on waters of the U.S.; 0.061 acre of permanent impacts and 1.473 acres of temporary impacts on waters of the State (characterized as riparian non-

wetlands), and 0.061 acre of permanent impacts and 0.697 acre of temporary impacts on Coastal Zone riparian non-wetlands.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The measures listed above for natural communities will be adopted to avoid, minimize and fully mitigate project impacts on wetlands and other waters. The full text of each measure is included in the Final Environmental Impact Report. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

Wildlife Corridors

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Project activities could result in temporary and/or permanent impacts to aquatic and riparian habitats along Aptos and Valencia Creeks. Construction activities involving in-water work and dewatering could result in temporary alterations to in-channel conditions within Aptos and Valencia Creeks and adjacent channel banks. Project activities could disturb channel bank and bed material and increase the potential for erosion and sediment transport downstream.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The impacts would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures and Best Management Practices that are incorporated as part of the project; and no effects to steelhead critical habitat are anticipated. However, due to potential dewatering, which could result in a short-term impact to benthic macro invertebrates, which could lead to a temporal loss of habitat, the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, Central California coast steelhead critical habitat. Implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures AMM-BIO-1 through AMM-BIO-23 and Mitigation Measures BIO-17, BIO-22, and BIO-24, and implementation of Best Management Practices would ensure that the project would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites within the Biological Study Area. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation. The full text of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are included in the Final EIR.

Conflict with Local Ordinances

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The County of Santa Cruz has a Riparian Corridor and Wetlands Protection Ordinance that aims to minimize and eliminate any development activities in the riparian corridor. The project would be potentially inconsistent with this ordinance. Potentially jurisdictional U.S. Army Corps of Engineers waters of the U.S. (other waters), Regional Water Quality Control Board waters of the State (streambed and riparian non-wetlands), California Department of Fish and Wildlife streams and riparian areas, and Coastal Zone/California Coastal Commission streams and riparian non-wetlands were identified within the project corridor, associated with creeks or drainages.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts on riparian and wetland resources and be inconsistent with buffers established by this ordinance. Implementation of avoidance and minimization measures AMM-BIO-1 through AMM-BIO-16 and Mitigation Measure BIO-17, identified in Section 2.3.1, Natural Communities, and implementation of Best Management Practices, would reduce this impact to less-than-significant. The full text of avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are included in the Final EIR.

Cultural Archeological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Two archaeological resources, CA-SCR-2/H and CA-SCR-222/H, have sites not entirely tested. Therefore, they are considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources for the purposes of this project. Disturbance of the untested portions of these resources (i.e., outside the Area of Potential Effects), could cause significant impacts on significant archaeological resources. It is possible that previously unknown archaeological resources could be uncovered during ground-disturbing construction activities. This impact is considered potentially significant.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The potential impacts on known and previously unknown archaeological resources would be reduced to less than significant by incorporating the following mitigation measures. The full text of these measures are included in the Final EIR.

- Conduct Mandatory Cultural Resources Awareness Training for Construction Personnel
- Implement Avoidance and Notification Procedures for Cultural Resources Discovered during Construction
- Stop Work if Human Remains Are Encountered during Ground-Disturbing Activities
- Establish an Environmental Sensitive Area for Resources CA-SCR-2/H and CA-SCR-222/H

Geology and Soils

Paleontological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects

Fossil-bearing sediments can be found within the project boundaries, and fossils could be damaged during earthwork operations.

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 Final Environmental Impact Report.

Statement of Facts:

The following measures will be adopted to mitigate project impacts to less than significant for paleontological resources. The full text is included in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

- A Paleontological Mitigation Plan will be prepared during the design phase of the project and implemented during project construction. The Paleontological Mitigation Plan will include provisions for paleontological monitoring during earthwork and appropriate collection and treatment of any discovered fossils.

Scott Eades

District Director (or designee)



Signature

02/20/2024

Date