

# Memorandum

**To:** CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

**CTC Meeting:** June 27-28, 2024

**From:** TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

**Reference Number:** 4.23, Action

**Prepared By:** Beverley Newman-Burckhard  
Assistant Deputy Director

**Published Date:** June 14, 2024

**Subject:** Approval of the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program in Merced County, Resolution G-24-53

## **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program, as proposed by the Merced County Association of Governments in Attachment B.

## **Issue:**

At its May 16-17, 2024 meeting, the Commission approved the rescission of the freeway declaration for State Route 152 in Merced County between Santa Fe Grade and State Route 59. Pursuant to California Government Code sections 14528.7 and 14528.8, the Merced County Association of Governments adopted Resolution No 2023/12-21-01 requesting the Commission's approval of a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program. The Commission's approval would allow proceeds from the future sale of excess state-owned properties on the rescinded route to be used to fund the projects on the Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program project list.

The State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program project list proposes two projects, both of which aim to advance the state's climate goals and provide residents with safe and reliable sustainable transportation options. The first priority, the Route 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path, will construct a one-mile multi-use path that provides students with a safe, separated facility to walk and bike to Merced College. Currently, there are no active transportation facilities in the project area, forcing students to walk and bike on the shoulder next to heavy commuter and freight traffic. The second priority, the Westside Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility, will provide critical operational support to the regional transit system, allowing for increased efficiency and the future deployment of a zero-emission fleet. Both projects are regional priorities in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and benefit the area where the original freeway route was proposed.

**Background:**

On April 28, 1965, the California Highway Commission adopted State Route 152 as a freeway route. As part of the planned freeway, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) purchased properties along State Route 152 between Sante Fe Grade and State Route 59 for the construction of six interchanges. Due to the lack of local support and funding, Caltrans did not construct the interchanges and has no plans to do so in the future. At the May 16-17, 2024 Commission meeting, the Commission approved Caltrans' request to rescind the unconstructed freeway route. The rescission of the route allows Caltrans to sell the excess state-owned properties. California Government Code sections 14528.7 and 14528.8 allow local and regional agencies to develop a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program when the rescinded freeway route results in excess state-owned properties. Proceeds from the sale of these excess properties can be used to fund alternative local transportation projects.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Resolution G-24-53
- Attachment B: State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program Request Letter, Resolution, and Project List from the Merced County Association of Governments

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**Approval of the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement**  
**Program in Merced County**

**RESOLUTION G-24-53**

- 1.1 **WHEREAS**, the California Highway Commission designated State Route 152 as a freeway route on April 28, 1965; and
- 1.2 **WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) purchased properties along State Route 152 between Santa Fe Grade and State Route 59 with the intent of constructing six freeway interchanges; and
- 1.3 **WHEREAS**, Caltrans did not construct the interchanges due to the lack of local support and funding; and
- 1.4 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission (Commission) rescinded the unconstructed freeway route on State Route 152 between Santa Fe Grade and State Route 59 at its May 16-17, 2024 meeting, at the request of Caltrans; and
- 1.5 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to California Government Code sections 14528.7 and 14528.8, local and regional agencies may develop a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program when a rescinded freeway route results in excess state-owned properties; and
- 1.6 **WHEREAS**, California Government Code sections 14528.7 and 14528.8 further stipulate that proceeds from the sale of excess state-owned properties from a freeway route rescission may be used to fund projects in the designated Local Alternative Transportation Program; and
- 1.7 **WHEREAS**, the Merced County Association of Governments adopted Resolution No. 2023/12-21-01 requesting approval of the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program; and
- 1.8 **WHEREAS**, the Merced County Association of Governments proposed two projects for the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program: the State Route 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path and the Westside Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility.
- 2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Commission approves the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program; and
- 2.2 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that proceeds from the sale of excess state-owned properties on the rescinded SR 152 route shall be used to fund projects on the State Route 152 Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program project list.

May 13, 2024

Tanisha Taylor  
Executive Director  
California Transportation Commission  
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RE: Request for a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program on State Route 152 in Merced County (PM 23.9 to R40.9)

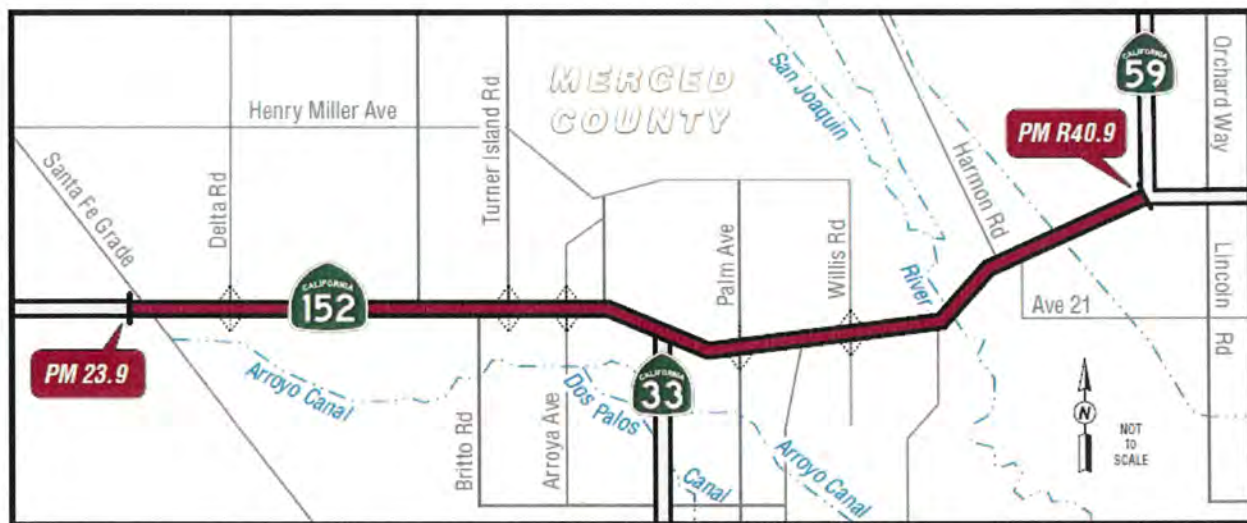
Dear Ms. Taylor,

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) is requesting the California Transportation Commission approve the formation of a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) as part of Caltrans' proposed rescission of State Route 152 from SR 59 to Santa Fe Grade on the west side of Merced County. The proposed purpose of the LATIP is to collect proceeds from the sale of the excess property for the use on projects identified on the SR 152 corridor. In collaboration with Caltrans, projects that align with the State's climate goals have been identified as 1) the SR 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path between the City of Los Banos and Merced College and 2) the development of a zero-emission compliant Westside Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility.

SR 152, formerly Legislative Route 32, was added to the California Freeway and Expressway System in 1959. On April 28, 1965, the California Highway Commission passed a resolution to adopt SR 152 as a freeway route. On January 11, 1966, the Department and the County of Merced executed a freeway agreement to change the location of a section of SR 152 in Merced County between the Delta-Mendota Canal and 1.1 miles west of the Madera County line, identifying it as a freeway. As part of this process, properties along the corridor were acquired for the future construction of six interchanges along the corridor between SR 59 and the City of Los Banos (*see map on next page*).

Today, SR 152 is part of the Interregional Road System (IRRS) and is built to expressway standards except for the conventional highway configuration within the City of Los Banos. All segments on SR 152 are four lanes. However, not all of the planned interchanges were constructed, and Caltrans does not have any planned new facility projects for this segment of the corridor in the next 15-20 years. Additionally, MCAG's Regional Transportation Plan does not include any constrained or unconstrained projects for this segment of the corridor, nor does the Merced County General Plan mention any project for the unconstructed portion of this route. Therefore, the freeway rescission and sale of excess properties has local and regional support (*see attached MCAG Board Resolution*).

With this support, Caltrans requested and the Commission approved of the Notice of Intent to Consider Rescinding Freeway Adoption Resolution NIU 23-01 at the December 7, 2023 meeting, and will be considering approval of the Highway Route Unadoption Resolution at the May 16-17, 2024 meeting. Therefore, if the rescission of the freeway declaration for the unconstructed portions along SR 152 between Santa Fe Grade and SR 59 and the declaration as a controlled-access highway is approved by the Commission, MCAG requests a LATIP be created to collect the revenue to be generated from the sale of the associated excess public lands.



\*Freeway Adopted April 28, 1965



Unconstructed Interchanges



Proposed Route Rescission from Freeway  
to Controlled Access Highway

As of 2023, the State owns and manages 71 parcels, or approximately 230 acres along the corridor. According to the SR 152 Rescission Evaluation Report developed by Caltrans District 10, the market value based on anticipated highest and best use assumptions is estimated to be approximately \$1,840,000 (230 acres at \$8,000 per acre). MCAG is requesting the creation of a LATIP as a tool to reinvest this funding back into the west side of Merced County. More specifically, this is an opportunity to invest these dollars into projects that help achieve the state's climate goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by creating safe and efficient alternative mode choices for Californians.

Thank you in advance for the consideration of this request, and for your commitment to investing in transportation projects that promote the safe movement of goods and people throughout California. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at (209)617-7759 or [Stacie.Guzman@mcagov.org](mailto:Stacie.Guzman@mcagov.org).

Sincerely,

Stacie Guzman  
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. LATIP Priority Projects and Maps
2. MCAG Board Resolution





**RESOLUTION NO. 2023/12-21-01**

**TO SUPPORT ROUTE RESCISSION AND DISPOSITION OF EXCESS PROPERTIES ON SR 152 FROM SANTA FE GRADE TO SR 59 AND TO REQUEST THE CREATION OF A LOCAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (LATIP) FOR THE SR 152 CORRIDOR**

**WHEREAS**, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization for Merced County; and

**WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing to rescind the freeway designation for SR 152 between postmiles 23.92 and 40.95 and dispose of excess properties originally purchased for the future construction of freeway interchanges along the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, this segment of SR 152 currently operates as an expressway; and

**WHEREAS**, neither Caltrans nor MCAG has plans to deliver the original interchanges along this corridor during the term of the current Regional Transportation Plan, nor are either entity planning any other projects that would conflict with the proposed rescission; and

**WHEREAS**, the proceeds of the sales of excess properties should remain on the SR 152 corridor where the original investment was intended;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** the Board of Directors of the Merced County Association of Governments requests that the California Transportation Commission rescind the freeway designation on SR 152 from Santa Fe Grade to SR 59; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:** the Board of Directors of the Merced County Association of Governments requests that the California Transportation Commission create a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program to collect proceeds from the sale of excess real properties originally purchased for SR 152 freeway interchanges for the following candidate projects:

- Priority 1: Westside Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility's Zero-Emission Projects
- Priority 2: SR 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path

The foregoing Resolution was adopted at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors for the Merced County Association of Governments, held on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of December 2023 by Director Pareira who moved its adoption, which was duly seconded by Director Samra and was adopted by the following vote:

**AYES:** Directors Espinosa, Hogue, Serratto, McDaniel, Samra, Nagy, Nelson, Pareira, Silveira, Llanez, Pedrozo

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** None

ATTEST:

By:

  
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director  
Merced County Association of Governments

AGENCY BOARD DESIGNEE

  
Joshua Pedrozo, Chair  
Merced County Association of Governments

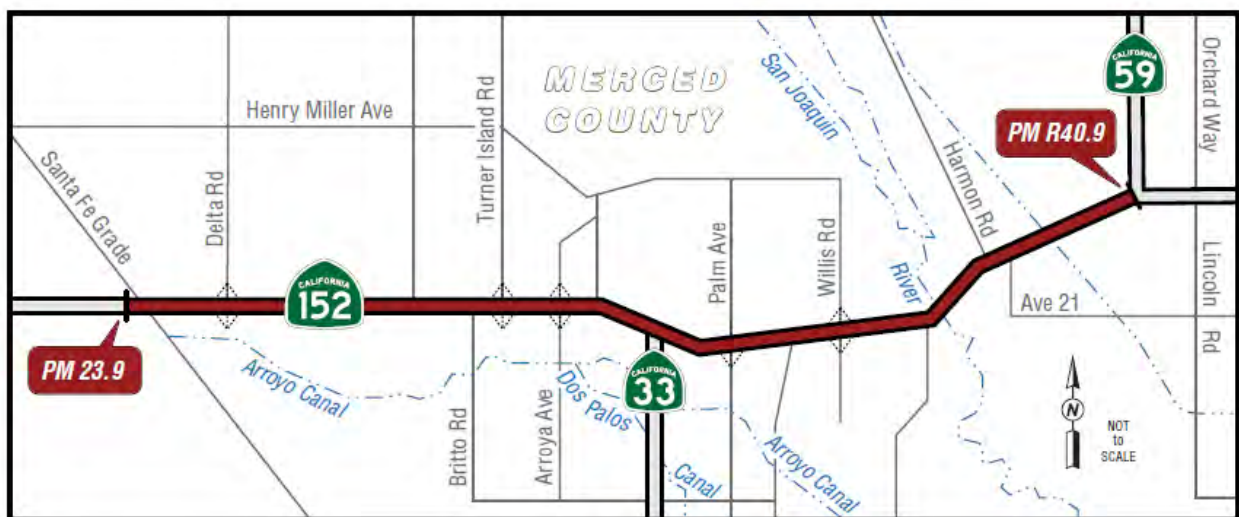
12/21/23  
Date



## Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program Priority Projects

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) is requesting the formation of a Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) as part of the rescission of State Route 152 between Santa Fe Grade and State Route 59 on the west side of Merced County. The proposed purpose of the LATIP is to collect proceeds from the sale of the excess property for the use on either of two priority projects identified on the SR 152 corridor. In collaboration with Caltrans, priority projects aligning with the state climate goals have been identified as 1) the SR 152 Regional Path connecting the City of Los Banos and Merced College west side campus, and 2) the development of a zero-emission compliant transit operations and maintenance facility on the west side of Merced County.

Caltrans has communicated that reimbursement for land disposition fees and administrative costs associated with the rescission will not be requested from the LATIP.



\*Freeway Adopted April 28, 1965



Unconstructed Interchanges



Proposed Route Rescission from Freeway to Controlled Access Highway



## Priority 1: SR 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path

The Pacheco Boulevard (SR 152) Regional Path is a planned multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path to connect the existing western most bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure in the City of Los Banos to the Merced College Los Banos campus along the SR 152 corridor. The one-mile path is planned from Badger Flat Road to Merced College.

Under current conditions, students are walking, bicycling, and skateboarding along SR 152 which is a critical east/west goods movement corridor and major commute route. The purpose of this project is to provide students with safe walking and biking access to the Merced College campus with connectivity to the City of Los Banos' local bike/ped network. Currently, no bicycle or pedestrian facilities exist on either the north or south side of SR 152 from Badger Flat Road and Merced College Campus Drive. This project would create a safe route of travel for bicyclists and pedestrians commuting to and from the college.

A project feasibility study was completed in 2018. MCAG and Merced County are working with Caltrans District 10 to develop a project delivery plan with a target construction year of FY 2026/27. Currently, \$2.3 million in local transportation sales tax funding has been allocated to the project. Other potential funding sources for construction of this project include the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program and the Local Partnership Program. This project is being developed as a partnership between MCAG, Caltrans, Merced County and Merced College.

The proposed use of the LATIP funds on the SR 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path will vary based on the project delivery schedule and the availability of LATIP funds. Considering how LATIP revenue is generated over time with the sale of each associated property, MCAG proposes to dedicate the balance of revenue that will have accrued by the year of construction to the project.

Estimated Cost: \$3,000,000 - \$5,000,000

Estimated LATIP funds: Balance of funds generated by the construction year (estimated FY 2026/27)

### SR 152 Pacheco Boulevard Regional Path - Project Area



*Existing conditions – SR 152 heading west towards Merced College Los Banos Campus*



## **Priority 2: Westside Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility**

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MCAG in partnership with the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County (TJPAMC) has developed a funding plan to construct an operations and maintenance facility on the west side of Merced County for TJPAMC - the region's single public transit provider in Merced County. This project is in conceptual development while property is being identified and acquired. The intent is to acquire property along the SR 152 corridor between the City of Los Banos and the SR 152/SR 33 "Y" just north of the City of Dos Palos.

Currently, TJPA has one operations and maintenance facility in Merced which requires buses that serve the west side of the county to clock unnecessary hours (and VMT) from the facility to the west side for regular service and maintenance. A roundtrip from Merced to Los Banos is 76 miles via SR 59 to SR 152 along the entirety of the segment of SR 152 involved in the proposed rescission.

TJPA currently provides fixed route commuter service between Merced and Los Banos, and micro-transit service in the west side communities of Dos Palos, Los Banos, Gustine, and Santa Nella. Having an operations and maintenance facility on SR 152 will not only provide several operational efficiencies like bus storage and onsite maintenance which will reduce VMT back and forth to Merced, but it will be essential in developing and deploying a zero-emission fleet on the west side of the county. As outlined in TJPA's Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) plan, TJPA is investing in a hybrid fleet comprised of both battery electric and fuel cell buses. As such, having a facility on the west side of the county will allow for a quicker and more impactful transition to zero-emission for westside services – particularly micro transit.

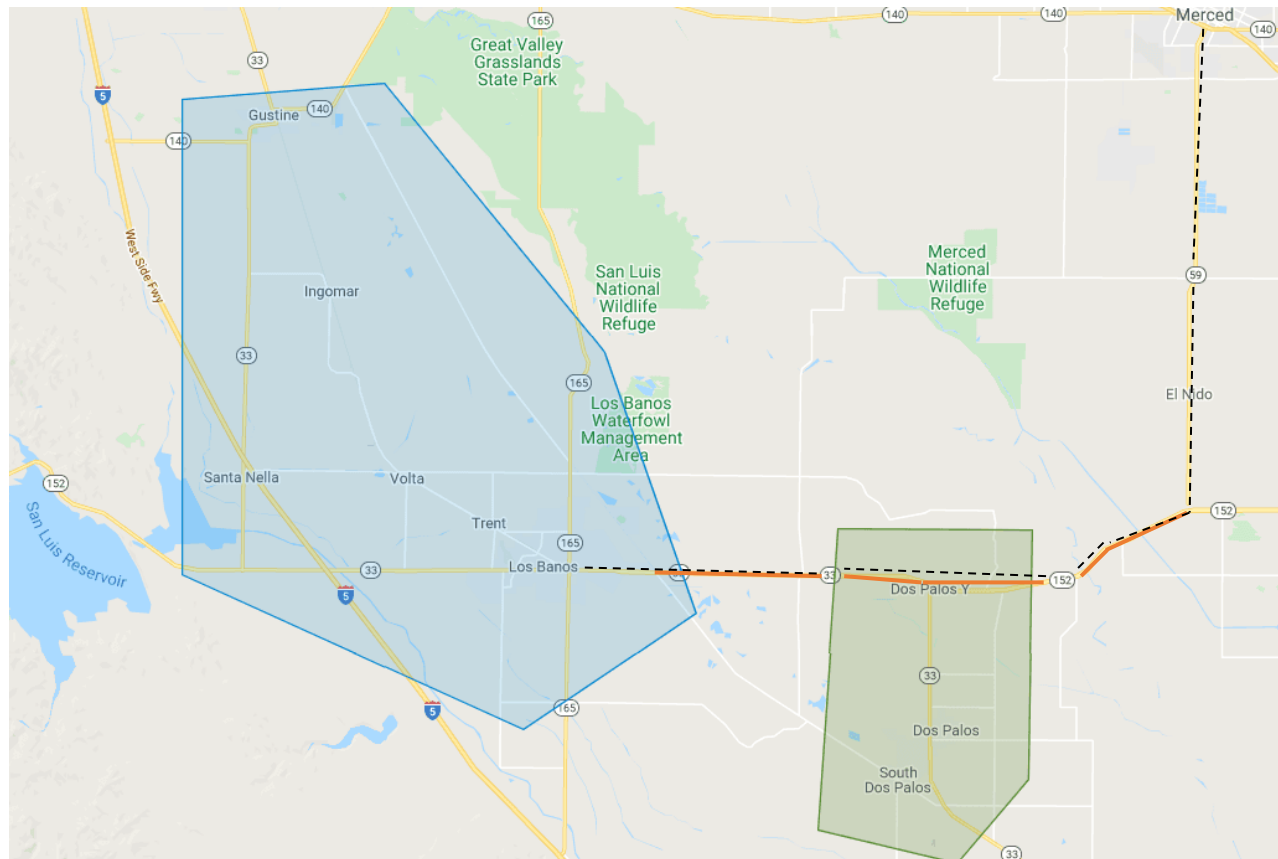
TJPA intends to utilize existing capital reserve funds to acquire the property and begin project development. Construction will be delivered with capital funds provided by SB 125 and other state and federal sources. The proposed use of the LATIP funds is to dedicated all funds unused by SR 152 Regional Path to install/maintain/upgrade the zero-emission infrastructure needed on site including the potential to install public charging infrastructure.





Estimated Facility Construction Cost: \$6,000,000

Estimated Need for Zero-Emission Infrastructure: \$2,000,000

Estimated LATIP funds: Balance of funds remaining after the completion of the SR 152 Regional Path project.

### West Side of Merced County – transit service areas and corridors



-  SR 152 Rescission Segment
-  TJPA's Los Banos micro transit service area
-  TJPA's Dos Palos micro transit service area
-  TJPA's Merced to Los Banos bus commuter route