

Appendix G Response to Comments

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period (May 27, 2008 to July 11, 2008). The comments have been numbered (Comment Set #1, Comment Set #2 and so on) in the order that they were received; a Caltrans response follows each comment set. In this appendix, comments are divided into three groups, based on whom the comment came from: individual members of the public, property owners or their representatives, or a public agency. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse closeout letter (dated June 24, 2008) is first, acknowledging this document's compliance with the State Clearinghouse requirements for environmental documents. No response was required for this letter.

Individuals:

- Comment Set #1 – Amy Salas
- Comment Set #2 – Penny Takier
- Comment Set #3 – Cheryl Crow
- Comment Set #4 – Michael Zappas
- Comment Set #5 – Robert Miller
- Comment Set #6 – Robert Polley
- Comment Set #8 – Bryce Dilger
- Comment Set #9 – Don Simoneau
- Comment Set #10 – Kim Simoneau
- Comment Set #11 – Captain Carl

Property Owner Representatives:

APN 009-631-011

- Comment Set #7 – Jeff Wagner, North Coast Engineering
- Comment Set #12 – INS and OUTS of ROUNDABOUTS
- Comment Set #13 – North Coast Engineering, Inc.
- Comment Set #14 – Ourston Roundabout Engineering
- Comment Set #15 – Carolyn Leach Consulting, LLC
- Comment Set #19 – Matteoni O'Laughlin & Hechtman Lawyers

APNs 040-031-001, 040-091-041

- Comment Set #16 – eda design professionals

Target Retail Center

- Comment Set #17 – Ellis Partners, LLC

Public Agency Comments:

- Comment Set #18 – San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)
- Comment Set #20 – Air Pollution Control District
- Comment Set #21 – San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building

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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

June 24, 2008

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE of PLANNING AND RESEARCH
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT



CYNTHIA BRYANT
DIRECTOR

Michael H. Thomas
California Department of Transportation, District 5
30 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Subject: US Highway 101/State Route 46 West Interchange Modification Project
SCH#: 2008051102

Dear Michael H. Thomas:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Joint Document to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on June 23, 2008, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 10th Street P.O. Box 3044 Sacramento, California 95812-3044
(916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.spr.ca.gov

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Comment Set 1

RECEIVED

JUN 17 2008

Public Works

Amy Salas
360 Alice Place
Paso Robles, CA 93446

June 14, 2008

California Department of Transportation, District 05
Attn: Michael H. Thomas
Senior Environmental Planner
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to review the Initial Study & Environmental Assessment (ISEA) of the US101/SR46W Interchange Modification Project. My concerns are primarily impacts on safety, water quality, increased noise, lighting and diminished view quality. Secondary concerns are traffic circulation, impact on arterial connections to the interchange and funding for the project.

Safe ingress and egress for our neighborhood will be an issue for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle traffic. Adequate sidewalks will be necessary for pedestrian traffic. Bicycle lanes will be needed in both directions. A left-hand turn lane should be built for the east-bound Theatre Drive vehicle traffic. What will be the typical vehicle speed? What traffic calming measures will be utilized? The speed limit for this new section of Theatre Drive should at minimum be lowered to 35 MPH. By landscaping with trees of various shapes and sizes, road would appear less like a motor speedway.

Downstream water quality will be an issue. With the new roads and development from build alternative 2 and subsequent Inn at Vintner's Village, how will the creek and Salinas River be protected from polluted run-off? How will the effects of this project on the watershed be addressed? What standards will be followed?

With regards to noise, my interest is in location M5. On page 107 of the report it is noted that our existing noise level is 57 dBA. After completion of Alternative 2, the noise level will increase to 63 dBA. This may not seem like a significant increase on paper, however, when you live within 300 feet of the project, it is. Our house is directly behind Orchard Supply Hardware. When the Target project was in the initial phase we attended meetings and were placated by measures used to mitigate the additional noise created by traffic. There was an additional source of noise, however, that was never addressed in the EIR. Noise from the air conditioning units on top of the buildings is terrible. It's especially

1-1

1-2

1-3

noticeable in the summer when our windows are open in the evening and in the spring or fall when we can be comfortably outside in the yard. As a result, I would like the noise where Theatre Drive turns east from it's current location, then north to it's proposed location be mitigated as much as possible.

On the subject of lighting, our ability to see the night sky has been greatly impacted, first, by the completion of Orchard Supply Hardware, then later by the Hampton Inn and Bella Serra. And, because our house is slightly elevated from street level, the lights from the hotels shine in our bedroom window. My main concern with lights is the cars traveling where Theatre Drive makes the turn to and from 46W. Additional street lights would also increase light pollution.

After reviewing the Visual Impact Assessment prepared by URS, the mitigation measures proposes for Key View 1 seem fairly vague. Page 6-3 states, "As part of project mitigation, formal landscaping would be introduced." What exactly does that consist of? I would like to have seen a visual simulation of KV1, not just KV2 and KV4 which were the only ones included in the report. Although the landscaping mitigation measures were vague in the Visual Impact Assessment, all of the above concerns may be effectively addressed through proper landscaping. Perhaps any dirt excavated from the site can be made into berms on the western corner of the Theatre Drive turn with large trees planted on top.

One of my secondary concerns is traffic circulation. How will cars which don't need to be in our neighborhood avoid turning onto Fortini? We have a paved entrance into our subdivision with a private road maintenance agreement. There are seven property owners required to maintain the road. In addition to service vehicles and guests using the roads, there are four other residences adjacent to the private roads which benefit from their use, but don't have to pay for upkeep. As a result, I would like any additional traffic from Theatre Drive minimized. Could some type of aesthetically pleasing barrier be erected to show a clear boundary between our neighborhood and Theatre Drive? Perhaps signage indicating a private road or gateway feature could be utilized.

As for impacts on arterial connections, my primary concern is for South Vine Street. That road is so poorly maintained now, it is a hazard for bike riders. The entire length of road from Kiler Canyon on the north end to 46W to the south needs to be repaved. Only the eastern lane adjacent to the new Gateway Center and Courtyard Marriott is adequate. If Build Alternative 2 is adopted, traffic on South Vine Street would be greatly increased, but the road needs to be repaired to accommodate it.

This brings me to my last point, funding. It seems from reading the ISEA that you are leaning towards Build Alternative 2 to complete the modification. However, this alternative costs \$5.8 million more. Since the Inns at Vintner's Village will be the primary beneficiary, are they paying this additional cost? And, will they paying to repair South Vine Street?

Thank you for your time. I'm looking forward to the public meeting on June 25th.

Best regards,

Amy Salas

cc. Frank Mecham,
Mayor, City of Paso Robles
Supervisor- elect, County of San Luis Obispo/District 1
✓ Mercedes J.M. Esperanza
Capital Projects Engineer, City of Paso Robles

1-4

1-5

1-6

1-7

Response to Comment 1-1:

Safe mobility of all transportation modes is a primary consideration of transportation projects, and the issues of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety are considered and addressed in the proposed project. The project layouts, shown in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 of the environmental document show pedestrian sidewalks, Class II bike lanes (bicycle lanes using shoulder pavement) in both directions, and protected left-turn lanes at the new intersection of Gahan Place and Theatre Drive.

With regard to design speed, the City has decided to promote a slower design speed of 25 miles per hour for this section of the frontage roadway system in contrast to the typical “collector” roadway speed posting of 35 miles per hour. The design speed is governed by safety and the design of road curves for maneuverability and sight distance for vehicles to be able to stop should an obstacle be present on the roadway. The actual speed of vehicles is determined by motorists’ perception of the ability to maintain a given speed and by enforcement of posted speed limits. The motorists’ perception of need to reduce the rate of speed will be affected by the required slowing down to make the turn from the realigned Theatre Drive roadway connection to the existing frontage portion of the roadway as well as the proximity of intersections that have signals (as shown in the conceptual layouts).

To slow their speeds, drivers are influenced by raised medians and landscaping; median and roadside planting areas for the project are shown in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 of the environmental document. The traffic-calming measures include the proposed road geometry, raised medians, and landscaping. These measures promote slower vehicle speeds by physically constraining speed and visually “narrowing” the roadway due to the presence of the landscaping.

Response to Comment 1-2:

New development is not proposed by this transportation project. This project proposes operational improvements to the existing transportation system to relieve congestion. A project sponsor proposing new development would be responsible for mitigating impacts as a part of a project that causes the impacts. Roadway stormwater runoff is addressed in Section 2.2.2 of the environmental document.

Appropriate best management practices would be implemented during construction and are incorporated into the preliminary design as discussed in these sections. These items

include among others listed: flattening slopes; sheet flow from roadway surfaces to grass and rock-lined swales; use of erosion control measures for collected flows by use of culvert flared-end sections; and rock energy dissipaters. These items, along with landscaping of various areas, would help minimize any increase of peak stormwater flow, reduce erosion, and provide treatment before discharge to the creek.

Response to Comment 1-3:

The project Noise Study Report identified potential noise receptors near the project area and made predictions for what the worst-case noise impacts would be in the current and project design year (20 years after construction). Inputs to the prediction model include the number and type of vehicles in the peak hour, the highest likely speed, as well as topographic features that could affect noise attenuation.

Caltrans is required to consider noise abatement when a project that moves traffic nearer to residents (Type 1 project), causes noise levels to approach (within 1 decibel) or exceed the noise abatement criteria (67 dBA for residences or 72 dBA for other land uses), or when project design year noise levels increase by 12 dBA (substantial increase) over existing noise levels.

Section 2.2.7 of the final environmental document is a summary of the project Noise Study Report. As noted in Table 2.2-7 of the final environmental document, Receptor M-5 has an existing peak traffic noise hour sound level of 57 dBA and a future-with-project sound level of 63 dBA for both build alternatives. Receptor M-5 is not situated on a residential use parcel, however, it is the closest receptor to existing residences in that area. While a commercial receptor has a less stringent criteria to trigger consideration of noise abatement measures (noise levels at or greater than 72 dBA), the projected noise levels and relative increase do not exceed either the commercial or the residential criteria. The project, if implemented, would not cause peak period traffic noise levels to approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria for residences, commercial sites, or result in a substantial increase over existing noise levels. Therefore, noise abatement is not considered as part of the project design. It is also important to note that residential receptors are further away from the proposed street improvements than the M5 location, noise levels drop as distance from the noise generator increases and therefore the non-substantial 6dBA noise level increase would be anticipated to be even less at the residential receptors further west of the project.

Construction noise was also analyzed in the project's Noise Study Report. Although construction activities would be short-term and temporary in nature, noise control

measures would be implemented as a part of the proposed project to minimize construction-related noise levels. These construction noise control measures are listed in Section 7.0 (Construction Noise and Its Control) of the Noise Study Report and also provided in Section 2.2.7 Noise, of this environmental document. Please note that the proposed project does not include air conditioning units or any other additional sources of noise other than that from vehicle operations.

Response to Comment 1-4:

The contours on the conceptual plans in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 in this environmental document show the proposed State Route 46 West/Theatre Drive intersection conforming to the existing elevation of State Route 46 West, which is approximately 10 to 12 feet below the plateau at the referenced location. A cut slope would result between the street level of the proposed Theatre Drive/State Route 46 West intersection and the residences approximately 600 feet south. This slope would provide inherent shielding from the turning vehicles headlights and the street lighting required for operational safety considerations at that intersection. As shown on those conceptual plans, vehicles moving toward the south veer toward the east and the headlights would point away from the subject residence by the time they reach the realigned Gahan Place/Theatre Drive intersection.

Final lighting plans would be developed per local regulations requiring that lighting be shielded, to the extent possible, to minimize light-related impacts to surrounding development. Section 2.1.7 “Visual/Aesthetics” of this environmental document contains Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measure AES-2 regarding project lighting. The project would include final design features to minimize glare and potential impact to adjacent properties. While the specific features are left to the detailed design, typical features used in transportation projects are directional lighting, luminaire shields, or other such means to minimize off-site glare. The referenced layouts show existing large oak trees to remain and proposed landscaping areas, which would provide additional screening.

Response to Comment 1-5:

Formal landscaping, as discussed in the Visual Impact Assessment document, refers to final design phase detailed landscaping plans for the project that would be completed with coordination between the City and Caltrans landscape architects. This is further discussed in “Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures” AES-1 within Section 2.1.7 “Visual/Aesthetics” of this environmental document.

Conceptual landscaping exhibits were prepared for the public hearing held June 25, 2008, and copies of the conceptual landscape exhibits from the public hearing are attached at the end of this response. The simulations included in the Visual Impact Assessment were prepared for selected key views in consideration of the conceptual landscaping areas being proposed. The simulations comply with guidance referenced in Section 3.1 “Federal Highway Administration Guidelines” that is listed by Caltrans for California Environmental Quality Act/National Environmental Policy Act compliance on the Standard Environmental Reference web page (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/guidance.htm>). The simulations included were specifically determined to be needed based on a combination of the relatively higher volumes of viewer exposure, areas proposed for relatively substantial change in form, and for which potential visual impacts were identified. Per this guidance, the degree of change in visual resource at view KV1 was determined not to require a simulation because of the following factors: the area is currently developed with commercial and roadway facilities; the unity of character will not be substantially changed; and landscaping along the street perimeter is expected to further mitigate street visibility.

Response to Comment 1-6:

Fortini Way is currently connected to Gahan Place immediately to the west of the Target retail center and is a minor residential roadway of nominal width. The connection of Fortini Way directly to Gahan Place is not proposed for change in either of the proposed build alternatives in this environmental document. Vehicular traffic, accessing either the retail center or other destinations from Theatre Drive as the frontage road along US 101, would not be expected to divert traffic from a major collector to Fortini Way due to driver expectation and the physical cross-sections of the roadways.

The continuity of Theatre Drive beyond the intersection with Gahan Place and the proposed streetscape treatment areas are expected to serve as directional guidance to traffic, which would therefore deter traffic from inadvertently accessing Fortini Way. While signage details are not shown in these planning documents (they are more appropriately shown in a detailed design phase if the project moves to completion), the presented concepts clearly show a roadway capacity differential among Theatre Drive, the revised Gahan Place connection to Theatre Drive, and the Fortini Way residential collector. This differential and the circuitous travel required to access Fortini Way would inform drivers who are not familiar with the area that Fortini Way is not a large commercial access route.

According to the data contained in the Traffic Report, traffic on Vine Street would not increase greatly. The proposed project is an operational improvement project intended to make movement through the interchange less congested and, therefore, easier for peak hour and non-peak hour traffic. The Traffic Report, and the summary discussion contained in Section 2.1.6 “Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities” of this environmental document, explain the existing and future expected congestion at the interchange and the improvements expected as a result of implementing the proposed improvements. The project, as proposed, would primarily alleviate operations for users of the state facility. This operational improvement on the state facility would attract traffic using the frontage arterial roads and serve to provide some traffic relief for those roadways.

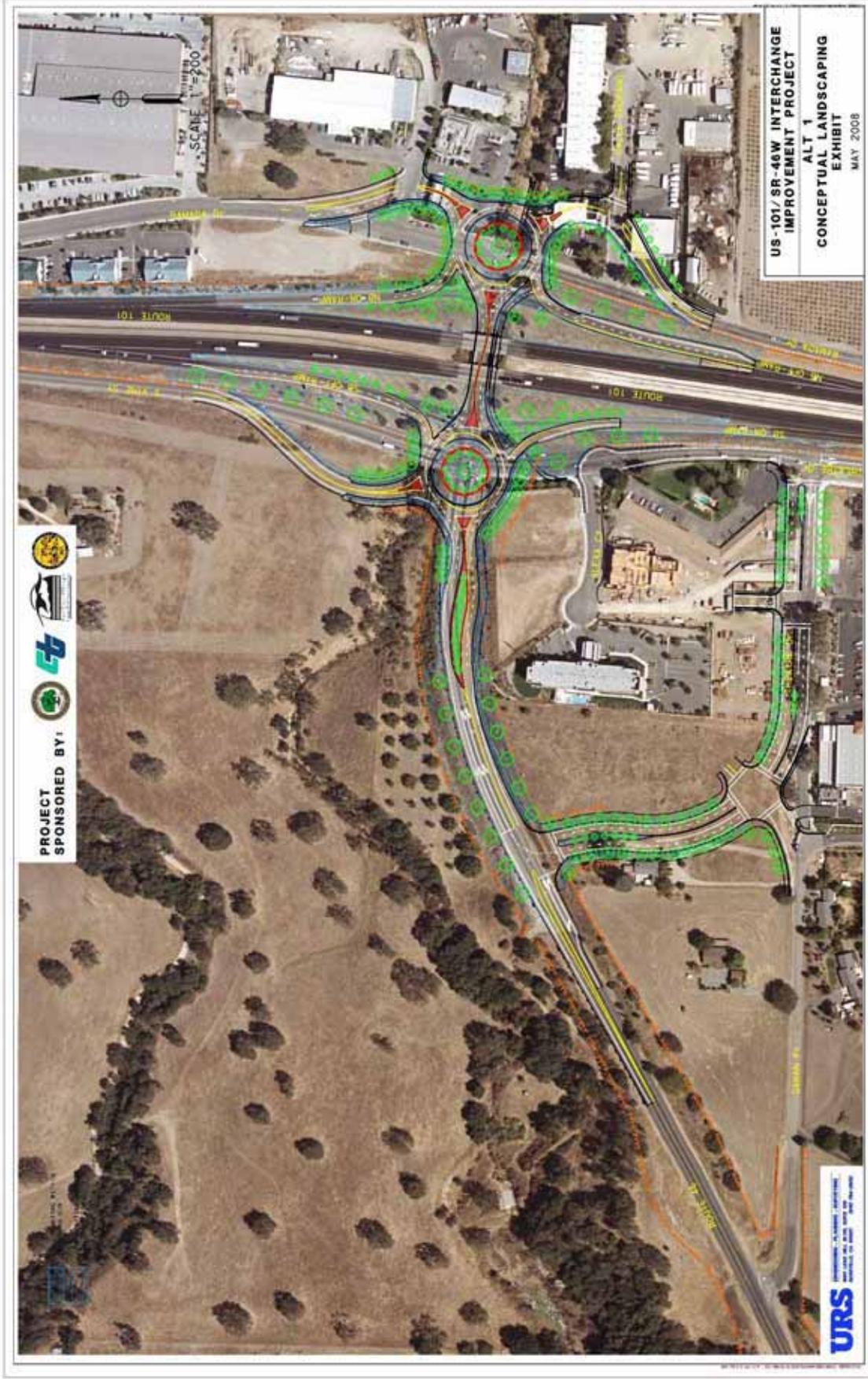
The volume figures shown in the Traffic Report reflect that traffic volume grows on the arterial connections if the interchange improvements are not implemented and is reduced if the project is implemented. This reflects the anticipation that drivers will search for and use the path of least resistance or congestion. Please also note that while the condition of Vine Street outside of the project area is outside the scope of the proposed project, the City has proceeded with a Vine Street improvements project in construction in 2009.

Response to Comment 1-7:

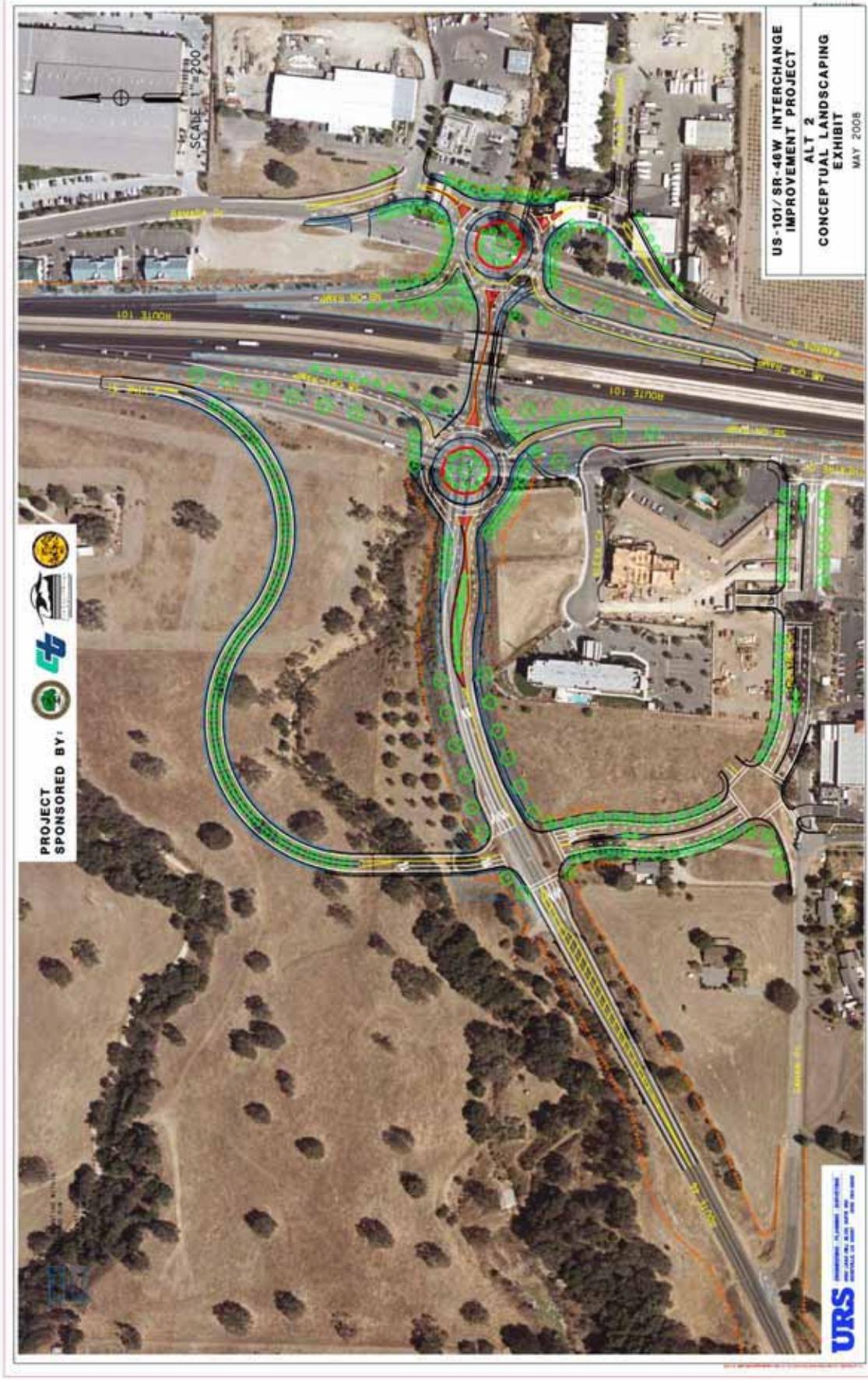
This environmental document clearly states that both build alternatives provide congestion relief and address the purpose of the project. Impacts, operational improvement benefits, and anticipated costs vary between the two viable build alternatives and that data is presented in this environmental document and supporting technical studies. Transportation funding sources include City traffic mitigation fees collected from development in the area, funds from San Luis Obispo Council of Governments as part of the legislated mandate for regional transportation planning, and funding coordination that is part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process. Section 1.2.2 Need, of this environmental document includes a discussion of a “jurisdictional split” study that was independently completed by San Luis Obispo Council of Governments to assign a traffic use “split” based on origin and destination modeling. This split of traffic use was then used to define the funding split for state and local anticipated funding distribution. It is noteworthy that the funding commitment is not programmed into a specific funding source and that construction of the proposed improvements would likely occur in phases due to funding needs and as discussed in Section 1.3.1.2 “Unique Features of Build Alternatives” of the environmental document. Additional costs would be collected from the development of

future projects in the area, such as the Inns at Vintner's Village. Repairs to South Vine Street are planned by the City of Paso Robles outside of the scope of this project.

Alternative 1 Conceptual Landscape Exhibit Shown at Public Hearing



Alternative 2 Conceptual Landscape Exhibit Shown at Public Hearing



Comment Set 2

Penny Takier
<cnatorn@hotmail.com>

To

<yvonne_hoffman@dot.ca.gov>

cc

06/24/2008 07:00 AM

Subject

Roundabouts

I saw in the paper this morning the future plans for the 101/46 intersection. Living just off of Theatre Dr. I see all the problems encountered getting through this intersection. There are only a few times of the day that this intersection gets overcrowded. Residents just go the other direction to get on the freeway. I HATE ROUNDABOUTS.....what idiot ever thought those were the answer...you want to talk about accidents waiting to happen? I have been on the ones in Santa Maria and people DON'T know how to drive on them. You have near misses EVERY DAY. I will drive in another direction to avoid them. My gas station is the Arco on Ramada, but if a roundabout is put there, it will no longer get my business. Introducing Live Search cashback . It's search that pays you back! Try it Now

2-1

Response to Comment 2-1:

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in response to comment 1-1, 3-1 and 3-2, the safe mobility of all transportation modes is a primary consideration of transportation projects, and the issues of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety as well as near-term and future congestion are considered and addressed in the proposed project.

The project layouts shown in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 of this environmental document show the roundabout layouts that underwent independent analysis and peer review as discussed in the "Roundabout Peer Review Memorandum" dated December 10, 2007. Federal Highway Administration documentation on the proven and empirical safety record of roundabouts was presented at the Public Workshop for the environmental review of this project. Various videos on how to maneuver through and the safety benefits of roundabouts were presented as were handouts including Federal Highway Administration publication FHWA-SA-08-006 "Roundabouts a Safer Choice." Additional safety and driver education information can be found at:

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/roundabouts/>

We appreciate your concerns about the use of roundabouts at this interchange. As discussed at the public hearing, people do need to get familiar with an intersection type that is relatively newer to the western states. The Federal Highway Administration publication handed out during the public hearing states:

“Navigating a roundabout is easy. But because people can be apprehensive about new things, it’s important to educate the public about roundabout use.”

As the comment correctly notes, roundabouts are showing up in other municipalities and, even within this city, development has already included roundabout construction. Caltrans has roundabouts constructed at ramp terminals in other areas throughout the state and has generated guidelines for implementation (Design Information Bulletin 80-01, “Roundabouts,” which can be found at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/dib/dib80-01.htm>). This Design Information Bulletin was also used in roundabout layout as referenced in Section 3 “Design Overview” of the “Roundabout Peer Review Memorandum.” A pertinent section of this Caltrans guide is Section 3.0 “Application,” which states:

“Use of roundabouts on the State Highway system may be considered for the primary purpose of enhancing safety and operational characteristics at intersections.”

The City of Paso Robles has also provided valuable roundabout information on its web site linked to the Community Development Department discussion on traffic calming at:

<http://www.prcity.com/government/departments/commdev/planning/pdf/FHWARoundaboutBrochure.pdf>

Among other reasons, roundabouts were chosen for this project due to their increased safety compared to more conventional intersections. Research cited in the above-referenced Federal Highway Administration publication that was handed out at the public hearing states that:

“Compared to other types of intersections, roundabouts have demonstrated safety and other benefits.” This publication further goes on to cite roundabouts improve safety by “More than a 90% reduction in fatalities, 76% reduction in injuries, 35% reduction in all crashes, Slower speeds are generally safer for pedestrians.”

Collisions may occur at any intersection but, in collisions that do occur at roundabout intersections, vehicles are typically not at the perpendicular angles of traditional intersections and are travelling at reduced speeds; therefore collisions that do occur at roundabouts are more prone to be minor and result in “fender bender”-type accidents.

These minor types of collisions typically result in less property damage and substantially lower injury and fatality rates than “T” and “head-on” collisions.

As presented in this environmental document, the proposed project alleviates congestion in the near-term and for future projections while enhancing safety by implementation of roundabouts at the ramp termini.

Comment Set 3

From: Cheryl Crow [<mailto:crow.cheryl@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2008 11:42 AM
To: Planning; slocog@slocog.org
Subject: Hwy 46 & 101 Interchange

City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

San Luis Obispo County, Board of Supervisors
1055 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1150 Osos St. Ste 202
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Ladies and Gentlemen

RE: Proposed Interchanges at Highways 46 and 101

Before deciding to spend between \$30 & \$36 million, are there simpler, less invasive and less costly options that might be tried? Perhaps a decrease in the traffic light cycling times to move vehicles more quickly off the northbound offramp of 101. Divert coastal destination traffic around town-perhaps an overpass for through-traffic from 46 west?

3-1

I assume the rate of traffic flow per hour from each direction and throughout the year has been determined through your research. Perhaps short-term change needs be accomplished only for peak dates or times when perhaps a detour could be accomplished.

Roundabouts/rotaries seem definitely to be a positive option for decreasing collisions and increasing traffic flow in rural and residential settings (most reports I've read suggest up to 5000 vehicles per hour maximum). However, one can only imagine the difficulties semi-trucks and motorhomes towing boats, both common at the intersection in question, might create in using a roundabout.

May we be assured that your engineers have contacted the following for their research in the use of roundabouts on major highway interchanges:

US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
<http://www.fhrc.gov>
Transportation Research Board of the National Academies at
<http://www.trb.org/>

3-2

I can only urge that you give this much further consideration before adopting a roundabout in this particular situation.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Crow
942 Pacific, Morro Bay
1190 The Pike, Arroyo Grande

Response to Comment 3-1:

Please refer to Section 1.3 “Alternatives” and Section 1.3.5 “Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn” of this document for a thorough discussion of the many alternatives that were considered during the process of narrowing down the proposed alternatives.

Signal cycling times have been adjusted many times in the past five years to maximize current configuration operations, including adjustment when the ramp widening occurred for the Southbound US 101 off-ramp. But signal cycle time changes alone cannot alleviate the current or future congestion. Overpass bypass structures were also considered during the Project Study Report phase and again during value analysis. Overpass structures were anticipated to create substantial environmental impacts, would not feasibly address all traffic movements, and would require high and long bridge structures that would be out of character with the area. The concepts were determined to be not supportable by federal, state and local agencies due to cost and impact factors.

The remaining two build alternatives under consideration were chosen as the ones that best provide for congestion relief (per the documented need and purpose of the project), in the most cost-effective manner. The traffic analysis discussed in Section 2.1.6, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, Regulatory Settings sub-section and in the Traffic Report noted Level of Service F (the worst level of congestion) for the design year of 2038. A sensitivity analysis documented that the Level of Service F threshold would be crossed in the 2010 to 2014 time period. As discussed in the value analysis study, these substantial congestion levels were determined by a multidisciplinary team to require extensive improvements to the interchange.

The currently shown roundabouts have been laid out to accommodate semi-trucks, motor homes with trailers, and the interstate truck trailer (STAA standard), which is the largest standard truck allowed on California state freeway corridors and has larger turn radii than the other vehicles.

Response to Comment 3-2:

The proposed roundabouts were preliminarily designed to accommodate US 101 and State Route 46 West vehicles, including interstate truck trailers (STAA standard). The preliminary roundabout design is based on Caltrans and Federal Highway Administration guidelines with independent peer review by roundabout experts and additional Caltrans district and headquarters oversight. The Federal Highway Administration and Transportation Research Board references cited in the comment specifically endorse the

methodologies that were used for the traffic analysis and were used as appropriate for the roundabout layouts considering traffic volume and lane use.

Comment Set 4 thru Set 10

CERTIFIED COPY

THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
AND
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U.S. ROUTE 101 (US -101)/STATE ROUTE 46 (SR-46) WEST
INTERCHANGE MODIFICATION PROJECT

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA
Wednesday, June 25, 2008
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
held at the City of Paso Robles Chambers Building
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, California

Reported by: Jeri Cain, RMR-CRP-CRR, No. 2460
File No. 208937



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1 PUBLIC COMMENTS were taken at the City of Paso
2 Robles Chambers Building, 1000 Spring Street, first
3 Floor, Paso Robles, California, before verbatim
4 reporter, Jeri Cain, CSR No. 2460, RMR-CRP-CRR, on
5 Wednesday, June 25, 2008, commencing at the hour of
6 5:00 p.m.

7 MEETING LEADERS:

8
9 APPEARING FOR URS:

10 REBECCA NICHOLAS, Public Affairs Manager and Facilitator
11 2870 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 150
12 Sacramento, CA 95833
13 916-679-2000

14 APPEARING FOR CALTRANS:

15 DOUG HEUMANN, Project Manager - Caltrans
16 District 5-Public Affairs Office
17 50 Higuera Street
18 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
19 805-549-3788

20 APPEARING FOR THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES:

21 MERCEDITAS J.M. ESPERANZA, Capital Projects Engineer
22 1000 Spring Street
23 Paso Robles, CA 93446
24 805-237-3861

25 PUBLIC COMMENTS BY:

Michael Zappas, Representative of River Lodge Motel
Robert Polley, Wayne's Tire
Robert Miller, Wayne's Tire
Jeff Wagner, EDA
Bryce Dilger, Pacific Coast Survey & Design Group, Inc.
Don Simoneau
Kim Simoneau

PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS; PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA

2 JUNE 25, 2008, 5:00 P.M.

3 -o0o-

4
5 MS. REBECCA NICHOLAS: Excuse me. Could I get
6 your attention, please. I just want to say thank you so
7 much for coming. The time is now a little past 5:00.
8 This is more of, as you can tell, an open house, a
9 normal workshop about the U.S. Route 101/State Route 46
10 West Interchange Project.

11 What we have are various workstations set up
12 for you where you can talk to people, as you are
13 discovering, about the various aspects of the project.
14 You can submit comments in writing. We have comment
15 cards set up around the room. We also have a
16 stenographer available to record your comments. The
17 meeting will adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

18 If you have any questions, you can ask me or
19 any individuals with name badges around the room. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. ZAPPAS: My name is Michael Zappas. I am
22 representing the River Lodge Motel. We're concerned
23 about the width of the berms and bike paths on the
24 proposed road and we want to know if it's a negotiable
25 item, if we can talk to somebody about maybe narrowing

MERIT REPORTING & VIDEO (800) 549-3376

3

4-1

PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 the road so our manager's apartment is not ruined in the
2 process.

3 My telephone number is 805-462-8606, and my
4 e-mail address is MikeZappas@charter.net.

5 MR. MILLER: I'm Robert Miller. My primary
6 concern is knowing the time frame as far as long-range
7 planning for the business and the relocation monies, and
8 so forth, that would be available to move our business.
9 Obviously, we're both interested in the values that
10 would be assigned and this is our first real getting
11 involved with the whole project at this point in time,
12 so a lot of this is new and we're quite interested and
13 want to be kept in the loop right from the beginning to
14 know what's going on on the east and the west side of
15 the freeway, because I think one is dependent on the
16 other.

17 My address is 591 Via Vaquero, Arroyo Grande,
18 and probably the best phone number is my home phone,
19 which is 805-489-6483. The next best phone number is
20 805-331-5820. And I don't have a whole lot more to say
21 other than I just want to be kept in the loop.

22 MR. POLLEY: I'm Robert Polley. I am part
23 owner of the property where Wayne's Tires is located on
24 the east side, and my concern is just that I have plenty
25 of notification so that when they go through the

5-1

6-1

PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 process, we're not in a stressful situation, a last-
2 minute situation; that we know in advance. And if the
3 funding is going to be a long ways out, we would
4 appreciate knowing that, too, so we can forget about it
5 for a few years, and everything.

6 My e-mail address is MPDPShellBeach@aol.com.
7 My phone number is 805-714-1635.

8 That's pretty much it. Just the communication
9 part of it. Just want to be kept in the loop.

10 We've got quite a few names and phone numbers
11 right now, so if they would just keep us -- when they
12 are starting Phase I, if they would let us know for sure
13 and even before so we can keep in the loop.

14 MR. MILLER: Well, pretty much everything that
15 he said, I go along with, and so we just need to be kept
16 informed as early as possible so we can make plans.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. WAGNER: My name is Jeff Wagner from EDA.
19 I think that the visual impact analysis needs to
20 evaluate the effect of the Vine Street bridge. It's
21 certainly visible to eastbound traffic. It's probably
22 visible to westbound traffic on Highway 46, but it
23 wasn't analyzed at all. I was told why, but it
24 doesn't -- the bridge doesn't show up in any of the
25 analyses, and it's something that needs to be looked

7-1

PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 at. So that's that comment.

2 Also, I think the oak tree mitigation needs to
3 be reevaluated. The number of oak trees removed for
4 both alternatives is a significant number, and I think
5 what the report is lacking is the significance of the
6 trees that need to be taken out. Some of them are 48
7 inches in diameter or larger. They are big trees. And
8 to replace them with a bunch of little trees just
9 doesn't make any sense. And so I think that needs to be
10 evaluated.

11 Third thing, the cost-benefit analysis, what I
12 saw was a dollar value of the benefit derived from this
13 project, but we're looking at two different
14 alternatives. One of them costs more than the other.
15 It's not clear to me that the extra cost provides
16 sufficient additional benefit, and I would like to see
17 some discussion on that. Quantitative as possible. So
18 that's it. My phone is 805-549-8658. E-mail address is
19 Jeffw@edainc.com.

20 MR. DILGER: My name is Bryce Dilger. I'm a
21 land surveyor in Paso Robles. And I just would like it
22 to be noted that I support the traffic mitigation
23 efforts on the Highway 46 East project that, as the city
24 grows, it's outgrown some of its current infrastructure,
25 and it's good to see efforts being made in this

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PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 progress. Furthermore, I support the design
2 alternatives being proposed by the city at this time.

3 My phone number is 805-238-9881.

4 MR. SIMONEAU: My name is Don Simoneau.

5 Personally, we like alternative 2 because of
6 the fact that South Vine Street aligns and doesn't go
7 through the circle itself, the roundabout, because I
8 typically use Vine Street more than I use the highway.
9 And what else? And the expense.

10 MRS. SIMONEAU: I am Kim Simoneau. That's
11 about it. I agree with what he said. It's more
12 expensive.

13 MR. SIMONEAU: In the long term over the years,
14 I don't want to get caught like where Paso city screwed
15 up on Golden Hill Road and made it a truck route, but
16 they didn't make the corner or the intersection big
17 enough for the trucks to make the corner, so that's why
18 I like this. It moves everything out and away from the
19 highway and then makes the highway roundabout the
20 highway roundabout.

21 The only thing I don't like about both
22 projects is the fact that they have to take the
23 businesses on the east side. Some of those businesses
24 have been there for a long time. Wayne's Tires has been
25 there at least 20 years. That's the only thing I don't

9-1

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9-1
(continued)

PUBLIC COMMENTS 6/25/08

1 like about that, unfortunately. Other than that, we
2 have to look towards the future.

3 MS. REBECCA NICHOLAS: The time is 8:00 p.m.
4 and the public meeting is now adjourned.

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS.
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO)

I, JERI L. CAIN, Certified Shorthand Reporter,
RMR-CRP-CRR, holding California CSR License No. 2460, do
hereby certify:

The aforementioned public comments were verbatim-
reported by me by the use of computer shorthand at the
time and place therein stated and thereafter transcribed
into writing under my direction.

I certify that I am not of counsel nor attorney for
nor related to any of the parties hereto, nor am I in
any way financially interested in the outcome of this
action.

In compliance with Section 8016 of the Business and
Professions Code, I certify under penalty of perjury
that I am a Certified Shorthand Reporter with License
No. 2460 in full force and effect.

WITNESS my hand this 26th day of June, 2008.



JERI L. CAIN, CSR #2460, RMR-CRP-CRR

Response to Comment 4-1:

The width of the realigned roadway of Theatre Drive was determined by the City based on guidelines contained in the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan. In Section 3 "Circulation Standards and Development Policies," Development Policy 1 states that the City will "... encourage walking and bicycling and enhance the overall livability of a community." With this guidance, 10-foot-wide sidewalks with landscape buffers from the curb and gutter were used in the planning level layouts for the current concepts to be environmentally assessed and documented. Various options for accommodating the necessary left turns and truck turns were reviewed, and the geometry shown was the result of that analysis with a footprint taking into consideration the widest street section believed probable. Potential revisions typically include a change in roadway width or some other change to the design within the current overall footprint. However, it is anticipated that an impact to the structure is likely; that impact is included in the current analysis.

Interested parties are invited to discuss the planning of the project with City staff at any time. The main contact for this project at the City is Ms. Ditas Esperanza, telephone number 805-237-3861. For some clarity on process, public policy mandates that the City Council approve appraisals and negotiations for any property acquisitions, final design and construction contracts before implementation. All City Council meetings are publicly noticed, and parties affected by proposed projects are contacted and notified by City staff prior to council action. Please also note that construction funding for the improvements shown on the conceptual layouts is not yet available or "programmed." And, since the property is currently advertised "for sale or build to suit," it is unknown if project construction will precede the sale and/or redevelopment of the property. Should the sale or redevelopment of the property precede the proposed transportation project, the current layouts will provide guidance to any future project on this parcel.

Response to Comment 5-1:

It is understandable that there is an interest in defining the timeframe for long-range planning and business interests. Section 1.3.1.2, Unique Features of Build Alternatives, Project Phasing subsection of the environmental document, discusses the phasing of the proposed project and anticipated timing for each phase of construction. The timeframe for the project construction would be determined for each phase as funding is secured throughout the Regional Transportation Plan's 20-year timeframe. Section 2.1-6, Traffic

and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, contains traffic analysis data showing a current forecast for project completion (open to public in 2018).

Please also see response to comment 4-1 for information on the actions of prior notification and contacts by City staff prior to approval by City Council to proceed with a project.

Response to Comment 6-1:

Please refer to response to comments 5-1 and 4-1. Additionally, the interim steps of phasing the project will require individual actions by the City Council, public notifications and affected parties notifications. It is expected that the project would not affect the area east of the interchange for many years to come. Refer to Section 1.3.1.2, Unique Features of Build Alternatives, Project Phasing subsection of the FED. As indicated in this subsection, Phase 4 involving the construction of the northbound ramp roundabout on the eastside of the interchange is the final phase of the project and is anticipated to go through the right of way acquisition process and then to construction many years into the future from now as discussed in that section.

Response to Comment 7-1:

The South Vine Street bridge location over the unnamed creek that parallels State Route 46 West on the north was analyzed for potential impact in preparing the Visual Impact Assessment. However, it was not included in a simulation due to factors related to intervening topography and vegetative screening. Section 4.2 “Project Viewshed” of the Visual Impact Assessment discusses factors recognized by field review that relate to whether a potential key view is a reasonable candidate for simulation. This document specifically identifies that consideration was given to road realignment, associated grading and removal of oak trees for identifying key view candidates.

The Visual Impact Assessment specifically considered the State Route 46 West travel corridor in both the eastbound and westbound direction as evidenced in Figure 4-2 by the shown locations and perspectives of Key View 2 and Key View 3. In analyzing Key View 3, the Visual Impact Assessment in Section 6.3 “Analysis of Key Views” discusses the realignment of the Vine Street frontage road and the addition of signals at the intersection in either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 scenarios. The Visual Impact Assessment supports the environmental document and was available for public review at the time of the public hearing. A summary of the issues discussed in the Visual Impact Assessment is included in Section 2.1.7 “Visual/Aesthetics” of this environmental

document and specifically cites the influence that existing topography and vegetation have on viewpoints.

Also, as detailed in Section 6.3 (Analysis of Key Views) of the Visual Impact Assessment, implementation of Alternative 1 would result in a low to moderate level of visual impact, whereas Alternative 2 would result in a moderate level of visual impact.

For additional clarity and to confirm the substance of the information presented at the public hearing, in regard to a traveler's perspective driving westbound along State Route 46, one's view is blocked to the north and northwest as the traveler approaches the proposed South Vine Street/Theatre Drive intersection by the topography of the rising roadway grade, the roadway superelevation and trees along the outside (northern) edge of State Route 46 West. This natural screening does not allow views to the north of State Route 46 for westbound traffic until vehicles would reach the proposed intersection of the South Vine Street/Theatre Drive intersection and South Vine Street bridge. So, the view of the bridge would only momentarily be visible from a driver's perspective.

Similarly, for eastbound traffic, views to the north and northeast along State Route 46 are obstructed due to existing vegetation and rising cut slopes on the northern edge of State Route 46 in this particular area. So, similarly for westbound travelers along State Route 46, the view of the South Vine Street bridge would only momentarily be visible from a driver's perspective. Views of this area are similarly screened by topography and vegetation for motorists on US 101. Such factors were taken into consideration when determining the key views to assess and which simulations would be prepared.

Response to Comment 7-2:

A detailed and comprehensive response to the issue of oak tree impacts is offered for this comment to provide sufficient information not only for this specific comment but for other related oak tree comments that will be referred back to this oak tree comment response.

Refer to Section 4.2 "Regional Species and Habitats of Concern" in the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) dated April 2007 and updated August 2009. This section explains that the Biological Study Area does not contain special-status plant or animal species and therefore the Biological Study Area was not identified as an area of substantial biological importance. This area did contain natural and commonly occurring resources such as the oak trees that have local or regional significance, but the section states that any impacts would be considered minor due to lack of loss of viability of

common species, lack of trends toward state or federal listing for protection and for lack of apparent changes in availability in large numbers throughout the region.

Section 5.1 “Direct Impacts” of the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) discusses oak tree impacts and mitigation for species of oaks using a “precautionary principle” defined as the estimated worst-case scenario based on preliminary plans. This estimation and precautionary principle is also consistent with the preliminary survey methodology outlined in Section 3 “Study Methods” where access to private parcels was discussed and a combination of field methods for analysis was also discussed. Section 6 “Avoidance and Minimization Measures” of the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) discusses the use of applicable County, City and Caltrans replacement of oak trees and native vegetation along with a requirement to develop and implement a “Native Vegetation Restoration and Monitoring Plan” before construction.

Section 2.3 “Biological Environment” of this environmental document, subsection 2.3.1 “Natural Communities,” specifies that the focus is on biological communities, not individual plants, and further contains the related “Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures” NC-1, which specifically relates to oak tree impact mitigation and defines an oak tree species replacement with 1-gallon plants at a ratio of 10:1 (10 oak trees planted per 1 oak tree removed). The 10:1 replacement ratio applies to any trees actually affected by construction of the project regardless of whether or not they were counted in the estimated counts related to the current layouts. For instance, if new trees grow along the proposed alignment and are subsequently affected at the time of construction, they would be subject to mitigation. Conversely, if existing trees counted in the current concepts for mitigation no longer are affected in the construction of the final design layout or no longer exist at time of construction, the 10:1 ratio would not apply to those specific trees.

The mitigation ratio is considered aggressive relative to a 3:1 or 5:1 ratio required for resource agencies for other recent projects such as the 13th Street Overcrossing project in the City of Paso Robles. The 10:1 replacement ratio is also independent of the affected trees’ size characteristics. The City of Paso Robles Tree Ordinance was not used as the basis for oak tree replacement because of team concerns about how 24-inch-box oak trees would permanently establish. Oak trees grown in 24-inch boxes at nurseries have a difficult time adapting to natural settings. Larger trees are dependent on irrigation, have trouble with root development, are typically slow to establish, have slower growth rates, and typically have a poorer success rate.

Research and personal communications with nurseries, landscape architects and arborists throughout the state, and by Caltrans project experience confirmed the consensus that small-container oak trees typically have a greater survival rate than large-container oak trees. Furthermore, smaller-container trees grow faster, so that an expectation of a 24-inch-box tree can be met in approximately a 5- to 7-year timeframe. Small-container oak trees adapt better to natural settings because they develop a stronger root system and are less dependent on irrigation.

To enhance establishment, oak trees would be installed with anti-herbivory cages, mulch, and supplemental irrigation, and would receive maintenance for three years. However, even using these establishment techniques, partial mortality is anticipated. The arid climate of Paso Robles, plus the possibility of a mitigation site with a non-desirable slope aspect, leads us to recommend a 10:1 ratio for the best chance at long-term success.

Subsequent to public circulation of the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) and the environmental document, on-site, on-foot field surveys were performed for the project area to further substantiate and characterize (species and size [diameter at breast height]) the magnitude of oak tree impacts anticipated as a result of the proposed project. The results of these surveys were reflected in the updated Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) dated August 2009 and superimposed on an aerial photograph (see figures following this response text).

It is important to note some trees were subsequently determined to be dead or removed by others between surveys and prior to mapping efforts. It is also important to note that even with greater accuracy, the number of impacted oak trees is anticipated to change due to natural or human activities, but the principle of a 10:1 replacement ratio still applies.

The subsequent survey revealed that Alternative 1 is anticipated to result in impacts (removal) to a total of 24 oak trees, and Alternative 2 is anticipated to result in impacts to 49 oak trees. That information is in the updated Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts) and the environmental document and reflects a more accurate level of impact to the approximate assessment. Per the verification field work, it has been confirmed that up to three oak trees having a diameter at breast height measurement of 48 inches or more would be affected by both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 since those oak trees are found in areas of improvements that are common to both alternatives. A 10:1 oak tree replacement ratio for Alternative 1 results in a total of approximately 240 small-container trees as opposed to approximately 104 24-inch-box trees using the City ordinance. A 10:1 oak tree replacement ratio for Alternative 2 results in a total of approximately 490 small-

container trees as opposed to approximately 182 24-inch-box trees using the City ordinance. The intent of the 10:1 oak tree replacement ratio is confirmed by sheer numbers to be planted with the hardiest size for establishment, creating the most successful habitat restoration possible within reason.





Response to Comment 7-3:

Both quantitative and qualitative costs and benefits should be considered when comparing alternatives. The rationale for selection of the preferred alternative is presented in Section 1.3.4, Identification of a Preferred Alternative, of this document.

Response to Comment 8-1:

Thank you for attending the public hearing, familiarizing yourself with project design components, and providing your comments in support of the project.

Response to Comment 9-1:

Thank you for your comment and participation. Please refer to response to comment 7-3 regarding segregation of differing trip types between road facilities and the benefit of continuity of frontage roads related to operational and driver expectation issues.

Section 1.3.1.1 “Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives” of this environmental Document contains a discussion on the ability of roundabouts to accommodate truck traffic. While project costs differ by several million, as shown in Table 1.3-1 “Comparison of Project Effects by Alternative” of this environmental document, the construction costs of either alternative are recaptured by the benefit of reduced delay over the 20-year analysis that is mandated for a capital investment project such as this (see Section 2.1.6 “Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities”). Avoidance of property-related impacts is always a consideration when defining value metrics and feasible alternatives. However, due to the level of congestion and the existing tight diamond configuration with development immediately adjacent to the interchange, property impacts are unavoidable for this project. Section 2.1.4.2 “Relocations” and Appendix C “Summary of Relocation Benefits” of this document provide technical information and the statutory regulations for the mitigation of impacts through relocation assistance provided by the agencies.

Response to Comment 10-1:

Thank you for your comment and participation at the public hearing. Cost information, as well as project impacts and benefits, was discussed in the environmental document and at the public presentation. Please also refer to response to comment 9-1.

Comment Set 11

Captain Carl <theesixfifteen@yahoo.com>

To Yvonne_Hoffman@dot.ca.gov
06/28/2008 12:13 PM
cc

Subject some Hiway46West and Interstate 101 interchange input

Please respond to theesixfifteen@yahoo.com

I would like to add my input into the ideas for improving the Interstate 101/hiway 46 west interchange;

Regarding the northbound exit off 101 into a traffic circle... I believe that the laws for traffic circles require that the traffic IN the circle has the right of way and traffic ENTERING the circle must yield. Knowing that there is a nearly constant stream of traffic heading east on 46 and entering 101 North, the traffic exiting 101 north would have to yield to the traffic IN the circle and judging from the length of the offramp off of 101 north that is planned, traffic will easily back up onto the 101.

11-1

Regarding the realignment of Theatre Drive around the old motel and onto Gahan and then over to 46west... I believe that the ninety-degree turn at Gahan and Theatre within the limited space that exists would not be nearly enough lane space for the volume of vehicles and pedestrians that use it presently, let alone in ten or twenty years. I think the solution would be to destroy the old motel and use the available space to widen Theatre Drive and Gahan and soften the angle of that corner a bit and allow more room for pedestrian crossings.

11-2

The situation that we are in with this entire interchange area is horrible. Twenty-some years ago the people that allowed the development of Theatre Drive and Ramada Drive and the shopping area on Theatre and the annexation of this land for the city of Paso Robles and the subsequent degeneration of South Vine (the only pedestrian and bicycle access to PasoRobles) were incredibly short-sighted. I am curious as to who was involved in the decision making process that allowed this development to occur in the first place. Their greed and ignorance will cost us and our children hundreds of millions of dollars to fix.

11-3

The bicycle ride from Templeton to PasoRobles is an easy ride, but many will not brave it because of the danger of South Vine. The neglect that the city of Paso Robles has allowed through this important transportation corridor is ridiculous knowing how much tax money from the shopping center has been generated for the city of PasoRobles. There are hundreds of families living along South Vine and Theatre Drive and I see all those children walking and biking along these streets daily. Do we continue to structure our society around the automobile or can we begin to plan our future in a responsible manner? Do we have to wait for children who have no choice and adults who choose to use alternative transportation to die or can we fix an easily foreseeable dangerous situation before it gets worse?

11-4

I am trying to keep this correspondance brief and I thank you for your attention

Carl

Response to Comment 11-1:

While vehicles entering a roundabout are required to wait for a gap before entering the circulatory roadway, **the results of the traffic analysis indicate** that traffic exiting US 101 will **not** backup onto US 101 due to traffic waiting to enter the roundabout. The roundabout operation was tested using three different traffic models for traffic projection to the year 2038. See Section 2.1.6 “Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities” of this environmental document and to the supporting technical Traffic Report for a discussion on how the peak traffic queues are accommodated by the ramps. Each traffic model provides queue (number of stopped or backed up vehicles) projections.

The traffic model that produced the longest queues was used for the design (this queue is 520 feet as shown in the Traffic Study on Table 11). The off-ramp lengths for both the southbound and northbound directions of US 101 are hundreds of feet greater than the forecasted queue as shown on Figures 1.3-1 “Build Alternative 1 Layout” and 1.3-2 “Build Alternative 2 Layout” of the environmental document. Therefore, traffic on the US 101 northbound off-ramp would be accommodated on the ramp and not extend to the US 101 mainline.

Response to Comment 11-2:

The traffic analysis, presented in the Traffic Study, was performed to determine the number of lanes required throughout the project limits. Per standard practice for transportation projects, the proposed road geometry has been designed in accordance with the traffic analysis and includes sufficient lanes and accommodation for the projected traffic through the 2038 forecast year (see response to comment 11-1). The proposed improvements at the intersection near the motel also include 10-foot-wide sidewalks, raised medians, and landscaping along Theatre Drive, as well as multiple marked pedestrian crossings. Per pedestrian crossing design criteria, crossing distances have been minimized to lessen the distance for potential conflict with vehicles (see also response to comment 1-1).

Response to Comment 11-3:

Past developments within the areas along Theatre Drive and Ramada Drive were reviewed and approved by either the City of Paso Robles, if within city limits, or the County of San Luis Obispo, if in unincorporated areas. The purpose of the proposed US 101/State Route 46 West Interchange Modification project is to reduce existing

congestion, improve traffic operations, and accommodate anticipated travel demand through the year 2038 for the US 101/State Route 46 West interchange.

Response to Comment 11-4:

Please see response to comment 1-1 for discussion on safety considerations. This project proposes bike lanes on South Vine Street and Theatre Drive. City staff that are members of the current Bicycle Advisory Committee have participated in the development of the project since the initiation of the current effort in 1997 (see Section 1.1“Introduction” of the environmental document). A shared-use path along the south side of State Route 46 West is proposed to connect the realigned Theatre Drive to Ramada Drive. While the City has another project underway to improve the road section of South Vine Street north of the interchange by repaving and adding bike lanes, that project is independent of the interchange project. It is the intent of these improvements to maximize safety and utility of pedestrian and bicycle travel through the corridor for the US 101/State Route 46 W interchange.

Comment Set 12

roundabouts
 <roundabouts@suns
 et.net>

07/11/2008 03:07
 PM

To
 Michael H Thomas
 <michael_h_thomas@dot.ca.gov>

cc

Subject
 Comments on Proposed Roundabouts at
 Route 101/46 West Interchange in
 Paso Robles

Mr. Michael H. Thomas:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I offer my comments in the hope they may help with the overall quality of the finished project. I ask for no specific responses to my comments, and hope you are not required by regulations to spend too much time answering them. Except for #5, my comments apply to both alternatives and are in no particular order.

1. The reversing curved approach from the west will slow high-speed traffic and let drivers know they are entering a slow speed environment. A long splitter island, beginning at the start of these curves, will further slow the traffic. (You may be planning on this, but I cannot tell from the scale of the plans.)

12-1

2. The radius of the westbound exit from the west roundabout looks rather tight. Entries need to be tight to slow traffic, but exits may be loose. A larger radius exit would push the exit farther from the adjacent eastbound entry, allowing entering drivers to know earlier that they may enter and increasing the efficiency of the entry. (This same comment applies to the eastbound exit from the west roundabout and the westbound exit from the east roundabout, but the bridge structure probably constrains these exits.)

12-2

3. If the westbound exit from the west roundabout requires two lanes, why can't both lanes be carried to the next intersection rather than be narrowed to one lane?

12-3

4. Regarding the Key Views on page 66, safety is greatly enhanced by more foliage which prevents drivers from seeing across the center island. Neither of these drawings have enough. Contrary to everything we engineers have learned about "greater sight distance promotes greater safety," this does not apply to roundabouts. Too much sight distance across the central island or to the left of each approach can encourage drivers to speed up to "beat" that approaching driver from the left. Shorter sight distance encourages slower speeds, the essence of roundabout safety. Please carefully check sight distance at all entries of both roundabouts, in accordance with Caltrans DIB 80-01.

12-4

5. In Alternate 2 eastbound traffic in the west roundabout has no reason to turn left but may make a U-turn. The temptation may arise to prevent this move, creating a "tear drop" (or "rain drop") roundabout. Please resist this temptation as it decreases safety by allowing westbound traffic to enter faster as they have no one to yield to. Look at US 101 in Arcata for an example of two tear drop roundabouts with too fast entries.

12-5

Thank you again for quickly sending me the information I needed to comment on this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I might answer any questions on roundabouts.

John Burnside, P.E.
 Consulting Traffic Engineer
 Designing roundabouts since 1985
 INs and OUTs of ROUNDABOUTS
 10628 Melody Road
 Big Oak Valley, CA 95977-9537
 530-432-6526
 530-575-5007 cell
 530-432-6511 fax

Response to Comment 12-1:

Thank you for your comment and participation. We agree that a long splitter island is appropriate to alert motorists travelling to the interchange from the west that they are entering a slower speed environment. The referenced splitter island is proposed starting approximately 400 feet west of the westerly roundabout as shown in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 of this environmental document for each of the build alternative layouts.

Response to Comment 12-2:

As noted in the comment, the existing US 101 structures constrain the geometry of the proposed entries and exits as does the topography of the adjacent steep ravine as shown by the contours in Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 in this document. While the exact layout of the entries and exits would be fine-tuned during the final design phase of the project, the current layouts have been analyzed and meet operational standards as discussed in further detail in the project Traffic Report and the Roundabout Peer Review Memo, both available for public review.

Response to Comment 12-3:

The project has been designed to carry year 2038 peak hour traffic. Please refer to Tables 2.1-8b through Table 2.1-8f and explanation under Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2 subheadings. The project is well within the capacity of a single lane and a second through-lane is not required farther west of the westerly roundabout based on the Level of Service B or C for Alternative 1 or 2, respectively, as discussed in Section 2.1.6 “Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities” of this document. State Route 46 West has a single westbound through lane through the project area and to the west of the project area.

Response to Comment 12-4:

It is agreed that sight distance standards for roundabouts are unique in that they are shorter, to promote slower travel through the roundabouts. The analysis of the roundabout design conforms to Caltrans Design Information Bulletin 80-01 “Roundabouts. A thorough analysis of sight distances was accomplished per the design standards of Caltrans Design Information Bulletin 80-01. Formal landscaping plans would be completed during the final design phase, and sight distances would be required to be re-evaluated during final design to be sure the landscaping and geometry interact properly per applicable design standards, including Caltrans Design Information Bulletin 80-01.

Response to Comment 12-5:

“Tear drop” roundabouts can create higher differentials in entry and circulating speed, as well as the circulating speed at different points in the circle. This differential can result in a decrease in safety. Therefore, a “tear drop” roundabout is not being considered as part of the proposed project, and there is no intent to do so in the future.

Comment Set 13



NORTH COAST ENGINEERING, INC.
Civil Engineering • Land Surveying • Project Development

July 11, 2008

Ms. Yvonne Hoffman
Mr. Michael H. Thomas
Caltrans District 5
Project Environmental Planner
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Comments on the Initial Study for the Highway 46 West/Highway 101 Interchange Improvement Project

Dear Ms. Hoffman and Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Highway 101/State Route 46 West Interchange Modification Project.

North Coast Engineering (NCE) represents the property owner, Quorum Realty Fund, for the following properties:

026-471-013	026-471-017
026-471-021	040-031-020
040-031-001	040-031-017
040-021-055	040-091-039
040-031-019	040-091-041

These properties represent the majority of the properties northwest of the proposed interchange improvements. Additionally, the proposed Build Alternative 2 would re-align Vine Street to pass through parcels 040-031-001 and 040-091-039, both owned by Quorum Realty Fund.

Quorum Realty Fund strongly supports the improvements proposed to the Highway 101/Highway 46 interchange and specifically supports Build Alternative 2. Quorum Realty Fund does not support Build Alternative 1.

The support for Build Alternative 2 is based on the following comments:

1. Build Alternative 2 is environmentally and functionally superior with the Vine Street connection at Theater Drive and Hwy. 46 because it is being designed as a parallel route to Highway 101, as opposed to connecting Vine St./Hwy. 46 in a 5 way roundabout as proposed in Build Alternative 1.

13-1

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725 Creston Road, Suite B Paso Robles CA 93446 (805) 239-3127 FAX (805) 239-0758

Ms. Yvonne Hoffman
Mr. Michael H. Thomas
July 11, 2008
Page Two

2. The 5-way roundabout proposed in Build Alternative 1 will be more difficult for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to navigate. Because of the increased traffic introduced with the Vine Street/roundabout connection, the level of service for the roundabout will deteriorate more rapidly than if Vine Street was routed to the west to connect to Theater Drive.
3. Build Alternative 2 is consistent with the approved U.S. Highway 101/Route 46 West PA-ED (2006) with the fact that Vine Street will connect with the CalTrans/City- approved new connection of Theater Drive to Highway 46, which would otherwise be a 3-way intersection.
4. Alternate 2 provides superior access to the 009-631-011 property, particularly if the Vine Street alignment is moved in a southerly direction. Please see the attached exhibit which demonstrates that a more southerly alignment is achievable. (The roundabout is optional, but would be a great entry feature.)
5. Bicycle transportation. Alternate 2 is a vastly superior connection for bicycle travel:
 - a. Vine Street has been recognized by the City, as well as the County, as a vital connection in the City-wide and County bikeway plans.
 - b. Alternate 1 would require cyclists to go through the roundabout with Hwy. 46 traffic, as well as on-ramp and off-ramp motor vehicles in a 5-way roundabout configuration, or use the sidewalk, which would present conflicts with pedestrians. Either option is dangerous and inconsistent with Federal requirements that the project provide safe bike and pedestrian access.
 - c. Alternate 2 would be a signalized intersection, one commonly understood by most cyclists.
 - d. Alternate 2 would provide the opportunity for Class I or Class II Bikeways, Alternative 1 would not.

13-2

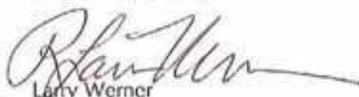
13-3

13-4

13-5

We encourage Caltrans to approve Build Alternate 2 as the preferred option.

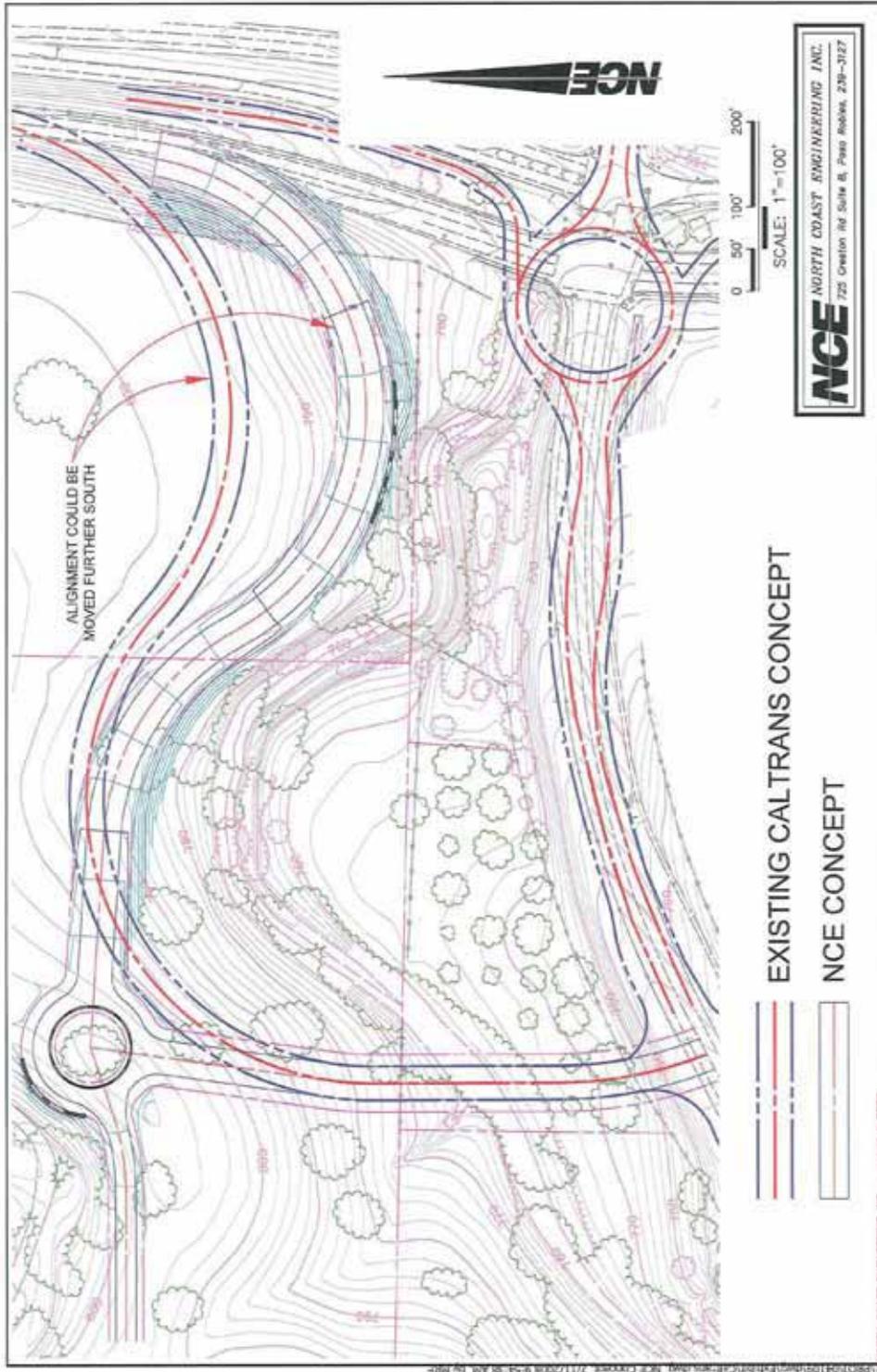
Respectfully yours,


Larry Werner
CEO

RI W/jms
Enclosure

Cc: Alex Furlotti
Jim App, Paso Robles City Manager
John Falkenstien, Paso Robles City Engineer

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Response to Comment 13-1:

Thank you for your comment and statement of preference for an alternative. Alternative 2 has been identified as the preferred alternative (see Section 1.3.4, Identification of a Preferred Alternative, in this document). Table 1.3-1 “Comparison of Project Effects by Alternative” in this document provides relevant information on environmental and operational benefits and impacts for both the build and no-build scenarios. Furthermore, operational analysis and level of delay for either alternative are discussed in Section 2.1.6 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.” This section shows a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.85 or less and delays of between 3 and 23 seconds for the roundabout entry legs of Alternative 1; it shows a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.74 or less and delays of between 4 and 12 seconds for the roundabout entry legs of Alternative 2.

Response to Comment 13-2:

Build Alternative 1 directs more traffic into the westerly roundabout than Build Alternative 2. However, it is speculative that motorists, cyclists, or pedestrians would have difficulty in maneuvering through the roundabout. For clarity, it should be noted that roundabout operation is measured in delay and volume-to-capacity ratios rather than in levels of service, which is appropriate for intersections with signals. Please refer to response to comment 13-1 for discussion on assessed delay and volume-to-capacity ratios for each alternative. Both alternatives accommodate non-vehicular travel modes. Please refer to response to comment 1-1.

Response to Comment 13-3:

Thank you for your comment. Please note that both alternatives are consistent with local and regional planning, as discussed in Section 4B “Regional and System Planning,” and with the need and purpose of the project.

Response to Comment 13-4:

Alternative 2 does provide more frontage and access potential along the proposed South Vine Street for the identified parcel as compared to Alternative 1. However, this parcel already has access potential to South Vine Street, and neither alternative provides new access that doesn’t already exist. The proposed design of South Vine Street in Alternative 2 has been aligned to minimize tree removal and other environmental impact due to grading, as well as costs of construction and right-of-way while meeting City and state design standards. Your attached exhibit shows an alternate, more southerly alignment of South Vine Street that requires more grading of the hillside slopes as shown on the

exhibit, more paved roadway, greater right-of-way required on parcel 040-031-001, which is zoned for agricultural use, and a separate distribution for traffic connections via a proposed “entry roundabout.” The addition of new traffic access/distribution improvements to parcels with public funds is not an appropriate use of public funds. It should be noted that minor variations of actual alignments and grading in final design are possible as long as they are consistent with the environmental analysis.

Response to Comment 13-5:

It is agreed that both the City and the County have recognized South Vine Street as a vital connection in bikeway planning.

It is also agreed that Alternative 2 does not require bicyclists using South Vine Street that are continuing southward or to the west at State Route 46 West to travel through the proposed US 101/State Route 46 West interchange roundabout(s). However, continuous bicycle and pedestrian facilities are provided through the interchange in both alternatives. Please see response to comment 1-1 for discussion on safe and continuous mobility for all travel modes.

Both alternatives include shared-use paths around the roundabouts and between the roundabouts. As discussed in Section 1.3.1.1 “Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives” in this document, these paths are connected to either bike lanes or sidewalks. The design is consistent with safety considerations and federal requirements and conforms to the requirements contained in Caltrans Design Information Bulletin 80-01 “Roundabouts” and the federal guidance publication “Roundabouts: An Informational Guide.” A Class I bikeway is a path that is separated from motorized vehicles; a Class II bikeway is one that uses the paved shoulder of a roadway and sometimes the non-delineated paved area (such as through intersections). Cyclists would have the option of using the roundabout as a vehicle would—by the roadway travelway—or by separated use of the paths. A shared-use path is also included in each alternative between the proposed Theatre Drive intersection with State Route 46 West and the westerly roundabout at the interchange.