

Summary

Effective July 1, 2007, the California Department of Transportation has been assigned environmental review and consultation responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327.

The City of El Paso de Robles (City) and the surrounding County of San Luis Obispo (County) area have begun to experience substantial commercial and industrial development in the southern portion of the City adjacent to the U.S. Highway 101 (US 101)/State Route 46 West interchange. The California Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the City, the County, and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, proposes to relieve local and regional circulation problems and reduce existing and future congestion by improving the US 101/State Route 46 West interchange.

The proposed project includes reconstruction of the US 101/State Route 46 West interchange ramp termini, and the relocation of Theatre Drive to a new intersection with State Route 46 West, west of its current location. Interchange reconstruction would convert the existing compact diamond interchange signal controlled ramp intersections to roundabouts. Adjacent frontage roads would be either redirected into the new roundabouts or relocated away from the interchange. Two viable build alternatives (Build Alternatives 1 and 2) and the No-Build Alternative are being considered for the modification of the US 101/State Route 46 West interchange. Project costs were estimated in 2009 as \$25.9 million and \$32.3 million for Build Alternatives 1 and 2, respectively. Build Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative for the proposed project.

The proposed project is listed as financially constrained in the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments 2005 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It is also included in the cost-constrained 2007 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments will update the RTP in June 2010, and cost estimates will be updated to match the most current estimate for the full cost of the project.

Summary of Major Potential Impacts from Alternatives

Potential Impact		Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Land Use	Consistency with the City General Plan	Build Alternative 1 is consistent with the City’s General Plan.	Build Alternative 2 is consistent with the City’s General Plan.	The No-Build Alternative is not consistent with the City General Plan.
	Consistency with the County General Plan	Build Alternative 1 is consistent with the County’s General Plan.	Build Alternative 2 is consistent with the County’s General Plan. The Salinas River Inland Area Plan of the County’s Circulation Element identifies need for circulation improvements along the US 101 and State Route 46 West corridors as accordance with recommendations in the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments’ major investment study. Per Section 22.06.040, Title 22 of the County’s Land Use Ordinance, County proposed projects are exempt from land use permit requirements.	The No-Build Alternative is not consistent with the County General Plan.
Relocations		Potential displacement of a maximum of four non-residential businesses with Build Alternative 1, including two gas stations and vehicle repair and service businesses on the east side of US 101. Potential impacts (e.g., partial acquisition) to motel west of US 101 along Theatre Drive.	Potential displacement of a maximum of four non-residential businesses with Build Alternative 2, including two gas stations and vehicle repair and service businesses on the east side of US 101. Potential impacts (e.g., partial acquisition) to motel west of US 101 along Theatre Drive.	No relocations would occur with the No-Build Alternative.
Utilities and Emergency Services		Utilities that may be affected include underground water lines, underground natural gas lines, electricity lines, telephone, and cable television lines. Emergency services may experience delays in response times during construction; however, travel along existing roadways (e.g., Theatre Drive) in the project area would be	Utilities that may be affected include underground water lines, underground natural gas lines, electricity lines, telephone, and cable television lines. Emergency services may experience delays in response times during construction; however, travel along existing roadways (e.g., Theatre Drive) in the project area would be	The No-Build Alternative would result in no improvements. Congestion and levels of service would continue to deteriorate potentially delaying emergency vehicles.

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
	maintained for emergency services during project construction.	maintained for emergency services during project construction.	
Traffic and Transportation	Build Alternative 1 would improve the operation (e.g., level of service) of the ramp intersections, and the intersection of Theatre Drive and State Route 46 West. See above discussions regarding “Utilities and Emergency Services.”	Build Alternative 2 would improve the operation (e.g., level of service) of the ramp intersections, and the Theatre Drive/South Vine Street intersection. See above discussions regarding “Utilities and Emergency Services.”	The No-Build Alternative would not address current and future operational deficiencies at the interchange.
Visual/Aesthetics	Build Alternative 1 would result in low to moderate impacts.	Build Alternative 2 would result in low to moderate impacts; however, Alternative 2 would have a greater visual impact overall.	No impacts.
Hydrology and Floodplain	Portions of this alternative would encroach upon the 100-year floodplain. However, current drainage patterns would be maintained.	Portions of this alternative would encroach upon the 100-year floodplain. However, current drainage patterns would be maintained.	No impacts.
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff	Build Alternative 1 is expected to result in a net increase of 2.3 acres of impervious surface. Increase in impervious surface results in increased rate of runoff and pollutant load to receiving waters.	Build Alternative 2 is expected to result in a net increase of 3.5 acres of impervious surface. Increase in impervious surface results in increased rate of runoff and pollutant load to receiving waters.	No impacts.
Geology/Soils/Seismic	Build Alternative 1 would be subject to seismic ground shaking. However, the proposed project would be designed in compliance with modern seismic safety standards.	Build Alternative 2 would be subject to seismic ground shaking. However, the proposed project would be designed in compliance with modern seismic safety standards.	The existing facility does not meet current seismic standards. The facility meets the minimum requirements for existing structures.
Paleontology	No known paleontological sites were identified within the project area, and no paleontological resources were observed during field surveys. Paleontological resources may be unearthed during project construction.	No known paleontological sites were reported within the project area, and no paleontological resources were observed during field surveys. Paleontological resources may be unearthed during construction.	No impacts.

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Hazardous Waste/Materials	Aerially deposited lead contamination may be encountered during construction, as well as lead-based paint in roadway pavement markings. Asbestos-containing material also may be encountered during structure demolition.	Aerially deposited lead contamination may be encountered during construction, as well as lead-based paint in roadway pavement markings. Asbestos-containing material also may be encountered during structure demolition.	No impacts.
Air Quality	Build Alternative 1 would not conflict with any applicable air quality plan, or exceed San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District's daily or quarterly thresholds for construction-related emissions. Construction would result in temporary, short-term impacts.	Build Alternative 2 would not conflict with any applicable air quality plan, or exceed San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District's daily or quarterly thresholds for construction-related emissions. Construction would result in temporary, short-term impacts.	Long-term increases in congestion would result in worsening of air quality.
Noise and Vibration	Build Alternative 1 would not cause a substantial noise increase, and no noise abatement is proposed.	Build Alternative 2 would not cause a substantial noise increase, and no noise abatement is proposed.	No impacts.
Natural Communities	Build Alternative 1 is not likely to affect special-status plants or animals. This alternative is expected to affect approximately 24 oak trees.	Build Alternative 2 is not likely to affect special-status plants or animals. This alternative is expected to affect approximately 49 oak trees.	No impacts.
Jurisdictional Waters	Build Alternative 1 would result in approximately 0.38 acre of impact to California Department of Fish and Game and Clean Water Act non-wetland jurisdictional features. No wetlands would be affected under this alternative.	Build Alternative 2 would result in approximately 0.29 acre of impact to California Department of Fish and Game and Clean Water Act non-wetland jurisdictional impacts. No wetlands would be affected under this alternative.	No impacts.
Animal Species	No special-status animal species were observed within the biological study area, nor are such species anticipated to be affected under this alternative.	No special-status animal species were observed within the biological study area, nor are such species anticipated to be affected under this alternative.	No impacts.

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Invasive Species	Build Alternative 1 would not be expected to introduce or materially increase or decrease the abundance or diversity of invasive plant species.	Build Alternative 2 would not be expected to introduce or materially increase or decrease the abundance or diversity of invasive plant species.	No impacts.
Cumulative Impacts	Planned development projects in the immediate area would introduce new construction activities and an increased level of traffic in addition to the proposed project. Build Alternative 1 would improve an existing interchange; therefore, no adverse cumulative impacts are anticipated.	The planned development projects in the immediate area would introduce substantial new construction activities and an increased level of traffic in addition to the proposed project. Build Alternative 2 would improve an existing interchange; therefore, no adverse cumulative impacts are anticipated.	Development would continue at immediate and surrounding areas under the No-Build Alternative. Traffic and congestion would continue to degrade under this alternative.