

Notice of Preparation

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Notice of Preparation

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To: Ms. Lee Lundrigan
County Clerk-Recorder
Stanislaus County
1021 I Street, Suite 101
Modesto, CA 95354

From: CA Dept. of Transportation STANISLAUS CO. CLERK-RECORDER Kalpana Surti
855 M Street, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

CA Department of Transportation will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (is is not) attached.


Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Jennifer Lugo, Senior Environmental Planner at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: State Route 132 Dakota Avenue to Gates Road

Project Applicant, if any: _____

Date 9/25/18

Signature 

Title Senior Environmental Planner

Telephone (559) 445-6172

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

Date removed from posting 10/31/18

**Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
for the
State Route 132 Dakota Avenue to Gates Road Project**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Lead Agency, in cooperation with Stanislaus County, is preparing environmental documentation to address impacts associated with the construction of an access controlled facility on either the existing State Route 132 alignment or on a new alignment just north of State Route 132 in Stanislaus County. A Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) was filed with the State Clearinghouse on September 26, 2018. An Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment would provide environmental compliance documentation for construction of the project. The environmental document will be prepared as a joint document pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As required by CEQA, Caltrans is distributing this Notice of Preparation requesting comments from responsible and trustee agencies regarding the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and reasonable mitigation measures that need to be discussed in the draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment to address each agency's concern.

Project Location

The project is located on and near State Route 132, west of the City of Modesto, in Stanislaus County, California. It is within the west central portion of Stanislaus County, 3.1 miles east of the San Joaquin River Bridge near Gates Road/Paradise Road and two miles west of the City of Modesto near Dakota Avenue. The project is approximately seven miles long (see attached Project Vicinity Map and Project Location Map).

Purpose and Need

The project would improve mobility through western Stanislaus County connecting State Route 99 to Interstate 5; provide adequate capacity for regional movement of traffic and goods; enhance the local circulation network that would accommodate agricultural generated traffic; and provide consistency with the existing and planned local, regional, and interregional transportation facilities. The project is needed to accommodate increasing growth and traffic demands which have generated current and forecasted traffic operations deficiencies for the existing facility. Several rural driveways along the existing facility create conflict movements for the mainline traffic.

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), working in cooperation with Stanislaus County, proposes to construct an access controlled facility within the western central portion of Stanislaus County, from Gates Road/Paradise Road to Dakota Avenue, post miles 4.5 to 11.7, located two miles west of the City of Modesto. This project (State Route 132 Dakota Avenue to Gates Road) would be an extension of the State Route 132 West project that is being designed on a new alignment in the City of Modesto. There are four alternatives under consideration on either the existing State Route 132 alignment or on a new alignment located north of State Route 132.

Project Alternatives

Alternative 1 – This alternative would construct a four-lane divided expressway on a new alignment north of State Route 132.

Alternative 2 – This alternative would construct a four-lane divided freeway on a new alignment north of State Route 132.

Alternative 3 – This alternative would construct a four-lane divided expressway along the existing State Route 132 alignment shifted to the north.

Alternative 4 – This alternative would construct a four-lane divided expressway along the existing State Route 132 alignment shifted to the south.

No Build – No improvements to the existing State Route 132 within the project limits.

Probable Environmental Effects

Caltrans would prepare an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment due to significant environmental impacts anticipated for the seven-mile project. Probable environmental effects are described below:

Community Impacts/Farmland/Cumulative Impacts

A Community Impact Assessment would be required for impacts to farmland, right-of-way acquisition, displaced persons/businesses, noise, and projected traffic growth in the area.

Biology

Potential impacts may occur to the tricolored blackbird, conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, Swainson's hawk, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, giant garter snake, and the San Joaquin kit fox. Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board will be required. It is anticipated that the project will require a Biological Assessment, Biological Opinion, and Natural Environmental Study.

Cultural Resources

Preliminary studies have shown that the project area has moderate to high sensitivity for buried archaeological deposits. A Historic Resource Evaluation Report will be required for more than 20 properties and structures within the project area. At least one resource may be determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties.

Hazardous Waste

Preliminary aerial deposited lead studies show soluble lead levels above regulatory thresholds throughout the project limits. Groundwater testing will be conducted for contaminants at a property used as an airfield for crop dusters on Gates Road. An Initial Site Assessment, Aerial Deposited Lead Study, and Preliminary Site Investigation will be conducted.

Air Quality

The project is in Stanislaus County in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. Stanislaus County is in non-attainment for PM_{2.5} and maintenance for PM₁₀. This project is capacity-increasing and will require Interagency Consultation. An Air Quality Study Report will be required. It is also possible that a quantitative analysis would be required.

Noise

The project is a Type I project defined as a proposed Federal or Federal-aid highway project for the construction of a highway on a new location or the physical alteration of an existing highway where there is either a substantial horizontal or substantial vertical alteration. Soundwalls may be proposed. A Noise Study Report is required.

Water Quality

A Water Quality Study will be required. The project involves work off the paved road, drainage work or alterations, and work within channels, such as channel change, stream diversion, excavation, pile driving, stockpiling, culvert work, rock slope protection, etc. The project has the potential to impact short-term quality in the area, however no long-term water quality impacts are anticipated.

Paleontology

A Paleontological Identification Report will be required due to high sensitivity resources being present within the project limits.

Visual Resources

A moderate/advance Visual Impact Assessment would be required due to vegetation and tree removal, the demolition of existing homes and business facilities, construction of new roadway structures, construction on a new alignment, and realignment to the current State Route 132.

Floodplain

A Location Hydraulic Study will be required. The Intersection of Gates Road and Maze Boulevard abuts the floodplain. Impervious surfaces will increase that could affect the watershed areas.

Utilities

Utility relocation and construction for power sources are anticipated for this project.