



Environmental Planning Phase: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is The SR-91 Central Avenue to Acacia Court Improvement Project?

The Project would implement freeway mainline and ramp improvements along State Route 91 (SR-91) from Central Avenue to Acacia Court, enhance local roadway operations, and include signage upgrades throughout the Project limits.

Where Is The Project Located?

The Project is located on SR-91, between Central Avenue to Acacia Court, within the cities of Carson and Compton, California, and includes one overhead sign location near Long Beach Boulevard within the City of Long Beach, California. The Project improvements cover a total distance of approximately 4 miles.



Why Do We Need This Project?

The Project is needed to improve existing freeway operations that result in accident rates higher than the statewide average due to the short weaving distances between the closely spaced interchanges at Central Avenue, Wilmington Avenue, and Acacia Court. The Project would provide safety benefits to the SR-91 study corridor by consolidating ramp access to Central Avenue, Wilmington Avenue, and Acacia Court. Vehicles that wish to enter or exit would use the C-D road which would generally operate at lower travel speeds reducing the likelihood of accidents.

What are the Project Alternatives?

There are two alternatives under consideration: a Build Alternative and a No Build Alternative.

The Build Alternative would construct a Collector-Distributor (C-D) road, implementing a concrete barrier and/or retaining wall separated system that would run parallel to the SR-91 mainline, consolidating the Central Avenue, Wilmington Avenue, and Acacia Court on- and off-ramps. The C-D road would have minimal right of way impacts because it would be constructed within existing right of way.

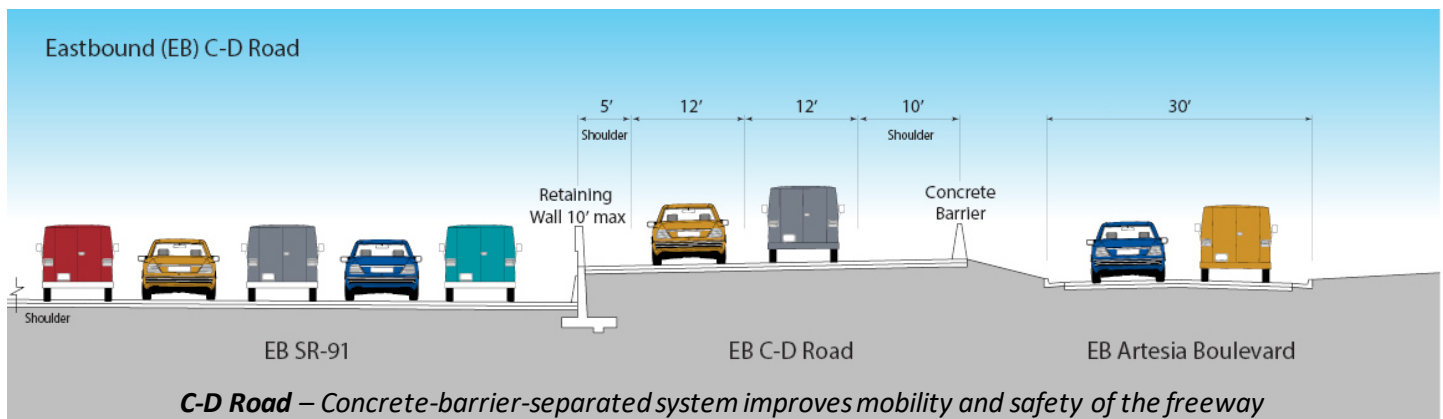
The No Build Alternative would maintain the existing freeway, ramps, and local intersections as they are today with no improvements.

What are C-D Roads?

C-D roads are a type of road that runs parallel to and connects the main travel lanes of a highway, frontage roads and entrance and exit ramps to improve safety of merging vehicles entering and exiting the freeway and reducing weaving-related congestion bottlenecks. C-D roads consolidate multiple access points into a single access point, which would reduce the number of entrances/exits on the freeway mainline and redirect the short and nonstandard weaving areas from the freeway mainline to the C-D road. This would improve traffic congestion on the freeway mainline by increasing the distance motorists need to travel between entrances/exits to merge on and off the freeway.

Who Is Leading The Project?

Metro and Caltrans District 7 are leading the Project, in collaboration with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG).



What is NEPA and CEQA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law in 1970 and established national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment. NEPA provides a decision-making process for federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of projects that involve federal funding, work performed by the federal government, or permits issued by a federal agency.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), was also signed into law in 1970. CEQA requires state and local agencies to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of proposed projects and to adopt all possible measures to avoid or mitigate those impacts.

What Level of Environmental Document is Being Prepared for This Project?

Caltrans, as the CEQA/NEPA lead agency, and Metro, as the project sponsor, have determined that an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is the appropriate level of environmental document because the impacts from the project have been determined to be less than significant.

What is the CEQA Process for an Initial Study /NEPA Environmental Assessment (IS/EA)?

An IS/EA is a study that evaluates impacts to the physical and natural environment related to the proposed project improvements. After the technical studies have been conducted, the next step is to circulate the environmental document for public review and comment. For an IS/EA, a minimum 30-day circulation period is required. After the public comment period is complete, all public comments received are considered and responded to.

Based on the determination of impacts and evaluation of public comments, the preferred alternative is selected and the IS/EA process will result in a CEQA Negative Declaration (ND) or MND and NEPA FONSI.

What Is The Project Status?

The Project is currently in the environmental phase. This phase includes preliminary engineering and environmental technical studies, which identify any potential Project impacts and proposed measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any potential impacts. An IS/EA is being circulated for public review and comment from March 8, 2021 to April 8, 2021 for a 30-day review period. A virtual public hearing has been scheduled for March 24, 2021. All comments received will be addressed in the Final Environmental Document (FED).

How Would The Project Benefit The Local Community?

The Project would implement operational and safety enhancements resulting in reduced congestion, improved traffic operations, and enhanced local road operations. The Project would include improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, transit connectivity, accessibility, and safety within the Project limits, including eliminating gaps in the sidewalk, additional LED lighting, striped Class II buffered bicycle lanes on both eastbound and westbound Artesia Boulevard between Central Avenue and Acacia Court and on Albertoni Street between Lysander Drive and Central Avenue, high-visibility crosswalks, and ADA-accessible pedestrian signals. Local pavement improvements at the Central Avenue and Wilmington Avenue intersections are proposed to reduce the amount of maintenance required compared to the existing pavement which is caused by heavy truck traffic.

Would Property Be Needed For This Project?

Project improvements would occur within Caltrans or City right of way with the exception of minor sliver acquisitions associated with improvements at intersections of Wilmington Avenue and Central Avenue. There would be no impact to any residences.

Are Noise Barriers Included In This Project?

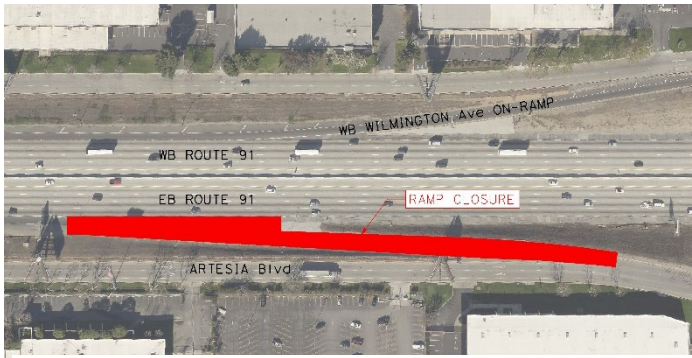
The Project limits are within a predominantly industrial area. A noise analysis was performed and noise barriers were considered for feasibility and reasonableness where potential noise impacts were identified. However, none of the noise barriers analyzed are included in this Project due to not meeting federal cost allowance and minimum required acoustic benefit.

When Can We Expect to See Some Relief on the SR-91?

The environmental phase of the Project is anticipated to be completed in Summer 2021 with the detailed design phase to be completed in Fall of 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2024 and would last approximately two years.

What will Caltrans do to Minimize Delays and Other Construction Impacts?

- **Noise:** Construction activities would be limited between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except during national holidays), and 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 pm on Saturdays adjacent to residential areas.
- **Dust/Air Quality:** The construction contractor must comply with all applicable laws and regulations as well as Caltrans standard construction specifications related to dust and air quality. Measures to reduce dust include implementing a dust control plan, applying water and soil binder to control dust, and covering soils before transport. Equipment and materials storage sites will be located as far away from residential and park uses as practicable. Best management practices (BMP) such as waste management, erosion and sediment control would be implemented.
- **Access:** A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be developed to minimize delays and inconvenience to the public during the construction period. The TMP will include a public awareness program to inform the public of Project progress and upcoming closures and detours prior to and during construction. Additionally, the contractor will be advised to conduct major construction activity during off-peak travel times. Temporary closures of ramps in the Project area would occur for a period of approximately 30 days at SR-91/Wilmington Avenue eastbound off-ramp and SR-91/Wilmington Avenue westbound on-ramp. No consecutive ramps would be closed at the same time. A Traffic Management Plan would be implemented, which would identify alternate routes, detours, and access points for motorists. The project is not expected to cause any temporary closures in front of businesses or impact access to businesses.



Eastbound Wilmington Avenue Off-Ramp Closure –
Temporary closure of the eastbound Wilmington Avenue off-ramp is anticipated.



Westbound Wilmington Avenue On-Ramp Closure –
Temporary closure of the westbound Wilmington Avenue on-ramp is anticipated.

Technical studies were conducted for the following resources: aesthetics, air quality, archaeological, biological, community impacts, cultural, geological, hazardous waste, land use and planning, noise, paleontological, transportation, and water quality. All of the technical studies show that there would be a less than significant impact to the resource topics listed above except for paleontological resources where impacts would be less than significant with mitigation due to potential sensitivity within portions of the project area. Appendix B Environmental Commitments Record of the IS/EA has a complete list of all strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts.

What Outreach Efforts Have Been Done For The Project?

The scoping process was conducted through initial outreach and notification to the public and public agencies about the project, including a notice to initiate studies. Monthly Project updates were presented to the GCCOG 91/605/405 Technical Advisory Committee. Since Summer 2019, the Project Development Team (PDT) held a total of five meetings with the cities of Compton and Carson to provide Project status updates. Ongoing coordination will continue between Metro, Caltrans, GCCOG, and the cities of Compton and Carson throughout the Project development process.

Agency and public participation for this Project have included interagency coordination meetings, notice of initiation of studies, informal scoping, and PDT meetings.

Who Has Received Notification Of The Public Comment Period?

Owners or occupants of approximately 640 parcels within the area surrounding the Project (approximately 500-feet from the Project limits and beyond to include pockets of neighborhoods) received notice of the availability of the draft environmental document for review and upcoming public hearing. Newspaper advertisements have also been published in three local newspapers: the Long Beach Press-Telegram and the Daily Breeze (in English), and La Opinion (in Spanish). The public comment period, public hearing information, and details on how to comment have also been posted to the Metro website: www.metro.net/projects/i-605-corridor-hot-spots-program/SR-91-early-action-projects/.

How Can I Comment on This Project?

You are encouraged to submit any comments and suggestions on the IS/EA no later than **Thursday, April 8, 2021** by:



SR91_Central@dot.ca.gov



Mr. Ron Kosinski, Deputy District Director
 California Department of Transportation
 Division of Environmental Planning
 100 South Main Street MS-16A
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
 Attn: SR-91 (Central to Acacia)



(213) 266-6937



There will also be an opportunity to provide formal comments during the 30-day public review of the IS/EA. The virtual public hearing will be held on **Wednesday, March 24, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** You can also submit comments by email, mail or telephone any time before and after the public hearing date but no later than **Thursday, April 8, 2021.** The virtual public hearing will be accessible by computer or phone at:

Webinar link: <https://tinyurl.com/b974vf7n>, Passcode: 5851

Dial in by phone: (213) 338-8477, Webinar ID: 940 2819 9772

Dial in by phone (Spanish): (571) 317-3122, Access Code: 740-084-765

The virtual public hearing will include a presentation by the Project team followed by public comments. Each speaker will be given a time limit of two minutes. Access to a Spanish translator will be available during the virtual public hearing.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Vanessa Velasco, Associate Environmental Planner, Caltrans District 7, at SR91_Central@dot.ca.gov or (213) 266-6937.

Stay Connected

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www.metro.net/projects/i-605-corridor-hot-spots-program/SR-91-early-action-projects/